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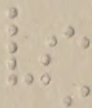
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BLUE BELLE OF THE FOREST

A Story of the Olden Time, in the Middle West.

By

MATILDA DOWNING UNDERWOOD

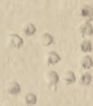


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PREFACE.

The writer of this story owes the harvest of thought that comes from out the past, to her love for hearing old folks talk. As a child she listened while they related tales and incidents that occurred in their youth and all through their long lives.

Early in life she left her mountain home. In Ohio, where she settled as a farmer's wife, these things remained stored in her mind while she cared for her country home, until the little ones who came, grew to manhood and womanhood, and were settled in homes of their own. All except one who remained enshrined in her mother's heart, always her beautiful angel child, assisting her in keeping the Golden Rule adopted in early life, while she filled to the brim her cup of duty in life, caring for her mother after she was unable to keep up a home of her own, until after many years the dear invalid sister, the afflicted husband and aged mother were all gathered to a better home. The latter, who lingered until her remarkable memory spanned ninety years, had an uncle, Jehu Bailey, who spent many years with the Indians. She also belonged to a Yearly Meeting of the religious Society of Friends, held in Baltimore, who sent a committee from its membership each year to visit tribes of Indians in the far West, when their only mode of traveling was on horse back.

BLUE BELLE OF THE FOREST.

In old Dick Run school house near the foot of the Alleghenies, when a young school girl, the writer read these lines in her lesson, as they are given below:

"The cruel Indian had been there,
My wife lay scalped upon the bed,
My daughter gone, I knew not where,
My son beside his mother dead."

Blue Belle of the Forest.

CHAPTER I.

A CAPTIVE FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE.

IT was midnight when a band of cavalrymen halted near the foot of the Allegheny Mountains. They were weary, but soon had a fire and a hastily prepared supper, after which they were not long in making their beds from the abundance of pine and spruce shrubbery that grew there. Spreading their blankets upon them, their saddles underneath for pillows, they were soon stretched out around the fire, all but one of the younger men, almost a boy, who had been pressed into service a few days before. He was restlessly wandering farther away where the horses were grazing and as he stood stroking a young roan horse, all that was left to him of home and friends, the Captain, whose orders were already repugnant to him, called out his number, saying, "Tie Roan and get down on your blanket for we will be up early to drive out all the redskins from the mountain westward."

The young man stood there almost paralyzed. "Must I submit, contrary to what my conscience tells me

is right? Why did my parents impress upon my mind the Bible teachings of Christ to be my example, to regulate all my actions toward all people, if I am to be compelled to help drive these owners of the soil away from their homes, and to kill and destroy them."

He tied his horse and came into the camp, taking his place among the soldiers, but he could not sleep. When all was quiet, the voices of the night seemed calling to him to obey God speaking in his soul, rather than man who would soon perish. He arose, as the fire burned low, folding his blanket around his saddlebags and other equipment, went to his horse and stroking his neck he prepared him for traveling, led him away to a woodland path leading westward, and mounting him, went on his way until he struck the Indian trail.

When his provisions were gone he allowed himself to be captured by a band of Indians, out on the war path in behalf of the French, who with them occupied most of the Ohio Valley at that time. Even while they were taking him, with his horse, as a prisoner to their village, he felt more peace of mind than he did while going out to destroy them. Though they might take his life here because he could not be understood, all would be well with his soul life, for no outward thing, not even the destroying of his body in which he lived, could separate him from Christ in whom he had eternal life.

For this reason, though a stranger in the midst of a silent band of Indians, his trusting heart was comforted.

Finding him equipped as a soldier had aroused their suspicion, and when they disarmed him and sternly pointed out the way he should go, he showed no reluc-

tance but cheerfully plodded along the trail, hoping he would not have far to go before reaching their camp, as he was becoming faint from lack of food. They had not gone far when sounds of musical voices mingled with joyous laughter was heard somewhere above them on the hills beyond the river and soon the smoke of an Indian settlement was in sight.

CHAPTER II.

LOST IN THE FOREST.

MORE than two decades from the time he was taken by the Indians another young man was wending his way through the same forest westward. Great changes had taken place. The settlements, though far apart, were growing in number. Land was being cleared and cultivated throughout the Middle West. Ambition led him, like many others, to leave his comfortable home in the East and alone seek his fortune in a far off country. Among the hills and many trails in the eastern part of the Ohio Valley he was bewildered and finally lost his way entirely and when the forest became more dense, even the Indian trail westward was not to be found.

While he was wandering around he saw a bunch of hogs. He scarcely knew what they were at first, as they were tall and lank with the peculiar wild appearance. Then there were so many more than he had ever seen together before. Finally their appearance suggested wild hogs. They all came running from every direction in the woods to a more open spot, and putting their heads together all stood still and seemed to be listening and holding a council meeting until all were quiet awhile. Then they suddenly struck out, running in another direction. After this had been repeated several times he was beginning to be disgusted with their uncanny actions.

The shades of evening were fast coming down on the forest where he dreaded to spend another night alone. Feeling for his flint and looking as he went, for a hollow tree, or some other suitable place, to kindle a fire if necessary to keep away wild beasts, he still managed to keep in sight of the hogs. The prospect was getting more and more gloomy.

"To be sure the horse can find something to graze on and I may come across a turkey or some kind of game; I can cook it and keep from starving for awhile." But this was not necessary.

The hogs had entered a clearing. A dim light, as from oiled paper windows, could be seen in the distance, and his heart filled with pleasant anticipation of finding humanity in the wilderness.

Then fear stole over him. Might it not be Indians, and if it were he would sooner risk staying alone with the wild beasts than fall into the hands of some cruel Indians. But that amount of cleared land must be the work of a white man, he would venture closer.

"Whoa, Barnie! Quiet now, we must keep in the edge of the woods until we can get closer without being seen."

The hogs had disappeared and quite a clearing opened up on the farther side of the hill. By the light of the rising moon the outlines of a good-sized log house could be seen and on a bench by the door sat a man whose appearance was that of a middle-aged white man.

Coming out of the shadow of the forest he crossed the log bridge that spanned the swiftly running brook and turned toward the house in the lane through the orchard.

The sound of the horse's feet on the bridge had

aroused the man from meditation, and as he came nearer he reached for his gun, calling out, "Who comes there?"

"Don't shoot, father," called a voice from within. "I am sure he is a traveler and may be lost, I have been watching him for some time."

"Well you should have told me, Isabell."

"I could not tell what it was until he came out of the woods below the bridge. Not coming in on the road, I was surprised to see a man on horseback coming out of the thick woods. I thought at first it was a panther, you know how they slip along and are afraid to come into the open when we have our lights burning."

The horseman, who had halted in the shadow of the trees, on hearing her voice now came forward and greeted her father.

"I am sure enough glad to see some one of my own kind. I have been lost in the forest and you may be sure I had no desire to find any of the red men, though some of them are not so bad."

"Yes, that is true considering the way they have been treated. You are welcome though, and I should have taken you in if you had been a native of the soil. I know you must be tired. Get off your horse and bring your things into the house."

"Daughter, bring a light."

The girl, who had been at the window, hearing their conversation, soon appeared at the door, lamp in hand, and met the stranger who stood there in the flickering light of the large grease lamp, holding his blankets and saddle bags on one arm, the bridle reins over the other.

If his voice thrilled the heart of the lonely girl and enlisted her interest, his magnificent form, expressive

eyes and gentle, courteous manner won her full admiration.

Her father took charge of the horse, while she led the way into the house. A great yellow dog interfered at the door. She said, "Never mind, Carlo, this is our guest. Go back to your kennel." And he went away satisfied.

"You can put your things on this chest until father comes in," which he did and went out to assist in caring for his horse.

Coming into the kitchen, she proceeded to rake the coals from the ashes, where they had been covered after supper. She soon had a nice fire and an appetizing meal on the way, by adjusting the kettle on the iron crane and hanging the long handled skillet beside it, in which she had placed some slices of bacon, and bringing the home-made hominy out ready to put over the fire as soon as the meat was done.

When they returned from caring for the horse the odor of a good supper greeted him. Like many another man he was ready to look with favor on the fair maid who could prepare such an appetizing meal.

"I see you cure pork the same as we do at home, which I would not have thought possible to do away out in the forest," he said, addressing her father.

"Oh yes! We have cleared quite a lot of land here and raise Indian corn enough to feed the hogs, beside what we need for our horses, cows and oxen."

"You do not mean to say you feed the corn you raise to the wild hogs, do you?"

"Oh yes! I take an armful of corn, climb over the rail fence and go into the woods. There I break it on a tree. I soon have all the hogs, that are near

enough to hear, after that corn. I don't want to get them to coming too near the fence, they might break through into the field and destroy my whole crop."

Then the stranger related his experience following the hogs and how they acted. The farmer laughed until the tears rolled down his sunburnt cheeks.

"Well it is too funny, they hear woodpeckers thumping and think I am out somewhere breaking corn. It was my big drove of wild hogs that brought you to our Forest Home, then. Well, I call that a good joke. It's like the old saying 'It's an ill wind that blows no good.' "

"It was a fortunate thing for me that I followed them. But have you any neighbors?

"Oh yes! There are some settlements fifteen or twenty miles from us now. I have lived in this wilderness about twenty years. I was with the Indians part of the time, away from all the white folks, with the exception of a young girl I found among them.

"The old Chief and his Squaw, who were her adopted parents, thought a great deal of her. In fact they had trained her up as their own; and, of course, they seemed to think more of her than they did of their own papooses, as they call them. They were proud of her not only because of her beauty, for she was endowed with a cheerful and fascinating disposition that would enable her to win the affection of all who new her. In fact, it is the kind that can tame the wild beasts and soften the hearts of the fiercest savages.

"When she was brought to the Indian village, the ones who could best appreciate and meet the needs of the lonely child adopted her and gave her the love and care by which she could grow. It is my opinion she was

taken out of a home of culture and refinement into that log hut in the forest.

"The one redeeming feature in this was her adopted mother, who in her early life, back in the mountains of Pennsylvania, had mingled with white people, and from her appearance and disposition, the probability is she had a parent, perhaps a father, of our race. Well let that be as it will, she could appreciate the girls fine traits of character. I never knew the Chief, her adopted father, to cross her in any of her wishes. During the first year I was with them, in her wild, free life, she appeared happy and contented.

"Through her influence I was taken into their band as one of them, after the council of the Chiefs. In the days that elapsed, before these could be brought together, I was guarded as a prisoner, not knowing what my sentence would be.

"The Chief of the band of Half Moon, who captured me, appeared to have much influence in the tribe. He sat watching me by the hour each day, as if wishing to know me better. How I wished I could get him to understand my language. His family showed much interest in me, as well as my horse. His Squaw could understand some things I tried to say. She seemed like one in earnest reflection trying to comprehend something that had been forgotten long ago.

"The little white girl was the same, they called her Blue Belle. I soon found out they could understand me better than the others, so when they brought me food and drink I managed to get them to know I wished them to keep my horse, as I had noticed they admired him. By signs they promised me they would not let any of the other Indians have him.

“By the time enough of the Chiefs could be brought together for council, Blue Belle and her foster mother had enlisted the interest of the other Chiefs families, as well as Half Moon. It was decided that, if I wished to stay with their tribe of Indians and be one of Half Moon’s band, I could do so. I can not tell you of the days and weeks and years that followed.

“While I was one of that band of Indians, with my horse an object of interest to the whole tribe, I joined them on their hunt. My experience with them was great. In helping to raise corn, beans and everything they were engaged in doing, I had the opportunity to enlarge their gardens and fence them with stones and stakes. While finding the most fertile ground and clearing it up for their squaws to plant I gained the good will of all of them.

“It was suprising how rapidly they learned my language while we were together doing the different kinds of work I had been taught to do on the farm at my own home. When corn husking time came the young braves joined with us. We had a great deal of sport watching to get the red ears of corn. They trusted me, then I had the care and use of my horse. I had for my companions Blue Belle, Muncy and her brother, Ocolia, almost constantly. They helped me to cut skins and make harness for my horse; then we got poles and constructed a rude sled to haul wood and bring in the game after a hunt. The squaws were delighted with my work, and I was quite a hero among them. While I longed for home, the conditions from which I had escaped later made me more than satisfied to be of service to the Indians rather than to help slay them.

CHAPTER III.

THE ATTIC ROOM.

“**I** SEE your candle has been lighted so I will show you the way to bed.”

“Yes” said the stranger, “I must admit that I need rest, but I am very much interested in your account of your early life and the home you have founded here in the wilderness. I trust when morning comes I will be able to learn more of your life and surroundings. It will be a great pleasure to me to see your garden, orchards and fields.”

Then taking up his saddle bags, together they mounted the rough stairway to a large attic room, where the host pointed to a comfortable looking bed, and setting the candle on a rustic stand, while wishing him good night, descended with a firm step to the kitchen below.

Finding he was in a very peculiar place the guest sat down on a chair to survey his surroundings. He discovered that the furnishings were all home-made. From the rafters hung a great variety of dried meats and linen bags, which from appearance contained dried corn and fruits, both large and small. On the floor were large boxes or trunks, the wooden frames artistically covered with bark. These were filled with skins of all kinds of wild animals, from the buffalo to the most delicate fawn.

Somewhat under the eaves, but wide enough to extend beneath the joist, were the beds of simple construc-

tion. The bedsteads were made of poles or small trees, with the bark peeled off, and made solid with the corners mortised. On the rails were wooden pins far enough apart to hold the cords on which the bedding was placed. These cords were made of skins, split and spliced, work that required a great deal of time and patience. But he found it a comfortable bed to rest upon; made, no doubt, he thought, by his genial host and his companion, who must have enjoyed the work of their own hands. The linen and blankets were coarser in texture than the fine ones he was used to at home. Yet everything was pure and clean and he was glad to have the pleasure of stretching his weary limbs on a good bed.

In this house he was safe from all kinds of wild animals and Indians; after snuffing out the candle the moon cast wierd shadows through a small window that had lattice work, and oil paper for light. The night air caused the leaves and branches of the trees to move gently, which made the light of the moon cast shadows around the room. A sense of loneliness came over him as he thought of home and how he had wandered away from his relatives and friends, and no doubt his mother's prayers were following her boy. While he closed his eyes something like secret prayer and communion of soul seemed to be lulling him to sleep.

But hark! What noise was that? Some one walking outside and coming towards the house. The door was unbarred to admit them. I wonder who it can be. I suppose somebody belonging to the family. It must be the girl's brother and he has been away hunting.

It was evident there was only one individual who came into the house. While listening to catch the sound of their voices below he was unable to distinguish one

word from another. By this time he awoke to the situation. He heard a sound as if some one was sharpening a large knife on a whetstone. This act caused him to fear. With that pleasant girl and her father he felt that he was safe and out of harms way. If mistaken in his confidence, all he could do would be to wait for time to decide the sequence of events. It was possible they had no wrong intentions. He might be getting his knife ready to dress some kind of game he had brought with him. But now he heard him talking very low to some person at the foot of the steps. Now he was coming up and seemed to be without a light while ascending the stairway.

At that moment a cloud must have obscured the moon for all was dark in that strange room. The stealthy step had now reached the landing and was coming toward the bed, just as a gleam of moonlight showed the outline of a man with a knife in his hand.

He felt under his pillow for his pistol in the spirit of self defense. Before he could draw it, with a quicker movement, the hand holding the knife had reached up to the joist and cut off a string of sausage above his head and quietly slipped down stairs.

He heard the voice of the girl saying "Oh! brother, I am so glad you got it. I do want something good for breakfast. Do you think he heard you?"

"Yes, he moved but I got it and hurried away, so that I would not disturb him."

The young stranger, hearing this, said to himself, "While I seemed to be in danger of my life, I might have taken his; but if that had happened I never would have forgiven myself, after their kindness and good intentions. This circumstance will make me be careful of my actions where life is at stake. Under excitement we can do things

that would be worse than death to us, as far as mental suffering is concerned."

Being in good health this shock to his nerves did not prevent his falling asleep. When he awoke next morning, the sun shining through the window casement lighted up the dark corners of the room so that he could see that every place was filled with various articles intended for the wants and use of the home.

The wool cards were showing their teeth in the darkness with which had been made the fine long rolls of wool that filled a large box to overflowing. Another box was filled with hackled tow, material enough for a whole winter's spinning. The powder horns, pouches and saddle bags, made of skins and many other things, hung on wooden pins. Also the long row of Indian blankets were very interesting to see as they bore traces of the finer finish of a woman's hand.

He could have lain for a long time looking at the curious articles that were hanging in all directions. But the birds were singing their morning songs and he could hear the family moving around in the rooms below. Having an idea that breakfast would soon be ready he arose with a grateful heart and soon descended to the kitchen. As he entered his sense of vision brought before him the interesting maiden of the night before. The brown eyes and dark auburn hair brightened to glistening gold in the morning sunlight, in the open door. He thought her face more beautiful than he had ever beheld, as she turned to introduce him to her brother, who was somewhat taller than his sister.

Just then the father came in with a smiling face and greeted the stranger, saying, "We are all very happy this morning. As you may be glad to hear, my son

returned from Columbus last night and brought good news from his mother."

"Yes indeed," replied the stranger. "I was interested last night after what you had told me of her. Not seeing her, whom I supposed was the one you called Blue Belle, I was afraid to inquire, as I thought she might not be living."

"Oh! thank God she is surely alive and will soon be home. She was with the Indians from early childhood. When they were driven from the Ohio Valley westward, her sympathy was aroused, and she mourned for them as she would if they had been her own people. Yet her love for me was a stronger tie, which, no doubt, kept her from going with them wherever they went. Next to the Indians she was most interested in the French, having often visited them at their Forts, for they were very pleasant and kind to the Indians.

"Then the English came on with their great armament, and with the eastern Colonists engaged in war. Her favorite place, Fort Duquesne, was near enough to our home, the cave on the steep hillside above the river, that we could see the flames from the burning Fort when the French left it and sailed away down the river to return no more. The name was changed to Pittsburgh, and the English flag floated above it.

"Yes, yes, Isabell, we will come." And they were soon seated around the steaming, hot breakfast and with bowed heads listened to the few words of thanksgiving that came from a full heart for their manifold blessings.

As soon as the meal was far enough on the way, their guest, made to feel at home with them, requested

to hear more of the whereabouts of the absent one, and if she had been long from home.

"Oh, yes, she is in the far West. Nearly a year ago she heard that her (almost) mother was ill and longing to see her Blue Belle. One of the Miamis coming east to see the grandfather, as they call the President of the United States, brought the message; also an urgent request from her red sister, Muncy, for us to come if possible. But it is a long way to their new hunting grounds, and much as we desired to go to them, the leaving of our home, for which we had toiled so long, to make what it is, seemed impossible. To leave the children alone here in our forest home was not to be thought of, as we would have to be gone so long; and we felt that it would be too great an undertaking for her to go alone all the way on horseback. However, while we were trying to solve the problem, a way, unexpectedly, opened for her going without any delay. As we heard of some Missionaries stopping to rest at Mount Vernon on their way to the Indian Territory. A man and his wife, who would be the best of company all the way.

"Though she regretted the long separation from her family, she feels very much at home in the saddle, not hesitating on account of the distance, for she is deeply attached to the red people, especially the only mother and sister she had known from childhood and had not seen for so many years.

"Well we received a letter last night, the first word we have had for several months. She is well and hopes to be with us by the latter part of October; only a few weeks as the month comes in to-morrow. She and her

sister were almost ready to start on their eastward journey when she sent the letter.

"Muncy being left alone, as far as her family is concerned, since her mother is gone, and she never saw fit to marry, now clings to my wife and longs to come back to the Ohio hills where they spent all the years of their girlhood together. I hope we can receive her as one of our family, for she has been a faithful sister and a true friend to me. I am glad she is coming for our children have heard so much concerning her. I want them to see her and get acquainted with some one who knew their mother when she was a little child."

"Yes indeed," said his daughter, "we sure enough are glad to hear Aunt Muncy is coming for mother has told us so much about her."

"My, we'll have jolly times when they are both here," said Frank.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CARPENTER.

“WELL, “said the farmer; turning to their guest; “son and I have been talking about what we can do to improve the place. We want to do more farming next year, and have more and better stock, but we are more interested in improving the home at this time. We would like to have a pleasant surprise for the little mother when she gets here. Opportunity is opening for us now to do some things to make life more pleasant, and I think we should begin at the house. As you are from one of the older settlements I thought you could give us some new ideas. We hear of great improvements going on farther east since the war. People really have had poor encouragement and but little means while the country was in such an unsettled condition.”

“Yes, I think I understand the situation. You have plenty of land but it is taking your time and strength to get it cleared, and you are so far now from other things that are going on that you are at a loss to know how to proceed. Your enterprising spirit will be met before many years. Saw mills and factories are coming your way, and you will have a market for your produce at Pittsburg, as that place is growing wonderfully. Have you been there since the great packing houses were built? I had the pleasure of looking over them on my way out here. While my father is a farmer, there are

many other concerns going on in this country that interest me at this time. I expect I can tell you more about things that are being made to make work easier. So far the land has been cleared in the most difficult way. It is simply wonderful how much has been accomplished with so little to do with; but in making the effort we are being blessed with the spirit of construction, and we see how true it is 'that necessity is the mother of invention'. You see one boy out of a large family can be spared for that kind of work; and some one is born with the ability to fill each one of the many kinds of work or to be a leader in opening the way for others in some great enterprise for the world. My part is making use of some of the tools provided for constructive work; in other words, I am a carpenter by trade."

"How fortunate," said Isabell; for that is just what will do us the most good."

"Yes indeed," said her father; and now, Mr. Downing, I understand that is your name, if you can stay with us a few weeks I will be glad to give you a chance to ply your trade without going farther. Can I employ you?

"Well I had not reached the part of the West I had in view when I left home. A friend of mine has located in the south-western part of the State, near a town named Wilmington. The county has been laid out and that place chosen for a seat. He writes me that carpenters are greatly in demand."

"To be sure they are, and wages good I have no doubt, but I will make it worth while if you will give us a few weeks of this fine weather. I could assist, and with a set of good tools, such as you are likely to have, we could soon have more than a log house with a clapboard roof if we do live in the forest."

"I must say I admire your ambition in undertaking it. I do enjoy helping provide good homes in the country. You will have a beautiful place here in a few years, and I will enjoy taking a hand in the improvements you have in mind. I can write my friend, I have decided to tarry on the way and will not engage a job there for some time. Now I am anxious to look around your home by daylight as I was so favorably impressed with its appearance last night."

"All right we will give you a chance to look around before getting into business, sir." Turning to Isabell for a parting word as they left the table, he said; "Now my little girl you can be planning for a new house while we are away."

"Yes and getting the work done at the same time," said she. "I always like to have something nice to think about when I have house work to do. Nothing could please me more than the prospect of having a new house when Mammy comes home. I can't think of anything that could surprise her more than that would."

While her father lingered the others had passed the garden and barn; halting now in front of the corn cribs. As he approached they were talking about the great quantity of corn stored away in the cribs, besides the new crop.

"Looks as if you were prepared to fatten a lot of hogs. Sure I was just telling your boy, if you had a pen large enough for that drove I saw in the woods last evening, and give them all the corn they could eat, you would soon have them in fine shape for market."

"Yes," said the farmer; "I call those hogs mine, because like other wild animals they have no owner."

"Well that is all right. They have grown up on your land. I expect your hardest times are over for I see your barn, sheds and cribs have all been made and covered with timber cut and hewed with the ax and broadax."

"Yes," said the pioneer; "our chances for getting things to work with were smaller when I started in here, than they are now, but there were things left on the battle ground after Braddock's defeat, that could be utilized for making many things, besides the broad sword that was beat into plowshares and the spears we had for pruning hooks."

"We suppose when people were driven out of their homes they left their stock, especially their hogs; and they had to run wild and live on snakes, acorns and beech nuts. I suppose you have heard of Snake Island? How somebody who landed there left a mother hog, and when they returned some years afterwards, they found it covered with hogs, while the snakes had disappeared. So they changed it's name to Hog Island. A name that is likely to be retained."

"Yes," said Frank; "for hogs are lots better than snakes. When we start into a new clearing we are glad to know that they have been through before us and devoured the snakes."

"Well," said the carpenter; "I suppose there will be plenty left in the forest after you have penned and fattened all you want or have corn for."

"Oh, yes, and when the country is cleared it will not be necessary for them to be running wild. I was so glad to hear of an opportunity to sell them on foot. We could drive them that far easy enough, if they were fat."

"Well they will gain flesh faster than you would think possible," replied the carpenter. With so much room to run they never get satisfied or keep still long enough to gain much, if you do feed them well every day. They have to be penned for profitable feeding."

"How heavy do they have to be?"

"I understand they take any that weigh sixty pounds and over."

"Well I have split rails enough for a large pen. Now that we have a market for the hogs we will build a fence right away. Frank knows how to do such things. He just wants something new in that line."

"Yes indeed," said the boy. "If you will select the place I can haul the rails and build one without much help, as you will be busy with Mr. Downing."

"Yes, and he might be able to suggest a place and tell us how large it should be."

"That I will do with pleasure. Right here is a fine location. This corn pen is just as far as it should be from the water. Those trees will make a fine shade and do for your father to break corn on until they get started to coming in at the slip gap. You can soon have them tame and have very little trouble feeding them. You can pull a rail out at the bottom on the side of that pen and it will come out fast enough for them to help themselves; which they will do without your having to invite them."

"Well that is great. I think I can have it all ready to be occupied before evening, when they will be coming for corn."

"That's one thing settled," said the farmer. "Now I am anxious to get back to the house and get our carpenter work planned, so you can make out the bill for

lumber. Yes, of course, we can go around by the orchard and up the lane if you wish."

"My! you will have a great many apples this year." I love to see the great limbs bending under the weight of the maturing fruit until they almost rest on the ground. Think it must be a pleasure to pick fruit like that."

"Yes, they are doing well. Expect we can load our wagons with them a little later and take to market and bring back lumber, after we get the work well started for the building."

"Yes," said the carpenter; "I see that is foremost in your mind."

As they quickened their steps up the lane, passing row after row of trees, all equally fine, he said; "This is surely the best apple orchard I ever saw. The soil must be rich, judging from those trees. But where did you get such a variety of trees for planting in this isolated place?"

"Why, out of Johnnie Appleseed's Nursery, of course. I am not sure that was his real name, but he was a man who did a great work for the western people, when he gathered seeds from the sider presses, or some where, and with them in his saddle bags, and on his faithful horse traveled over the wilderness, clearing our places and fencing them with his own hands. He planted and cultivated the nurseries that would supply the country with apple trees, and the settlers are indebted to him for most of their orchards."

"As they drew near the house the farmer said; the first thing to be decided is how the new apartment can be added, and such improvement as this one requires. Of course, we must let the old house stand."

So the carpenter walked around the quaint building, looked it over from the top of the stone chimney to the clapboard roof, and carefully scanned the corners where the logs were joined and the smoothly finished daubing inserted.

"Well what do you think of it?" said the owner when it was all inspected.

"Why, it is my opinion it will be good for many years. You have used good timber and done a good job putting it together. It is one of the best of its kind and when the glass windows are put in and a coat of whitewash put on it will be a real nice looking house."

"That was what we had planned to do before you came, but now we hope to have something nicer."

"Well, of course, the new one will be better inside and will soon be needed to harmonize with other improvements on your farm, for you can have lumber from the mills now."

"How about the doors, they are good yet, or do you want something finer?"

"No, I think we would rather not have the old house changed much. After a while we can take off the heavy bars and let the latch string hang out for our friends when they come. What are you thinking about it little girl," said he to Isabell, who was standing in the front door listening to their conversation.

"I think you are right in leaving the old house stand nearly as you made it, Daddy," she said. "I believe it would be best to put the new one right in front of it and just as wide as it is, then we can have two large rooms on the first floor and a hall and two or three rooms upstairs."

"Yes, my dear, that all meets my approval, with one exception. I think we should provide for one spare bed room down stairs for a guest chamber, or in case of sickness."

"Yes, I had not thought of that," said Isabell; it must be light and not to small."

"Of course, and you can use it for a sewing room too. I wish your mother was here to help us plan."

"Well if she were here she would leave it to you. That was what she said before she went away. We were talking on the subject of a new house, she said if we ever built another one you would have to be the architect, as you had seen so many more homes than she ever had."

The carpenter had been stepping off the ground while they were talking and just now came up with the suggestion that the new building be placed a few feet away from the old one, joining them by a porch between the doors, or it could be enclosed like a hall.

"I think that would be more satisfactory than a lean-to."

"Of course," said Isabell; then the light can come in at those windows and we can have a narrow bed for flowers and a little walk between the houses."

"Won't that be fine? Then you can sit by the window and read and when you want a change look at the flowers and rest."

"I know Mammy will like that."

"Sure, sure that will be all right," said her father.

"Now we are ready for the square. I brought all my smaller tools but that seemed unhandy to pack and I left it out. It must be the most important for we can't begin the job without one."

"Well I have a wooden one I made myself," and he started to bring it but met his daughter at the foot of the stairs.

"Here it is, Daddy. You have so many things but I found it in your tool chest. I think we will need this house if we get anything new."

"Yes, indeed, girlie, we will have new things to furnish the new house, and have carpet and fine curtains too."

"Yes, we will enjoy having pretty things, but I know Mammy and I will always love these big chairs and all the things you made with your own hands," she said; while they stood in the door and watched the carpenter, who on receiving the square had begun his work. "Dear old Forest Home must represent the past as well as the present." Then turning she hastened back to the kitchen where many things were waiting for one pair of hands to do.

The father went out to find Frank and arrange for making a trip to the saw mill, while the carpenter made out his bill for lumber that would be required for framing the house. He found the boy unloading the last load of rails, all he thought would be required for building the hog pen.

"I am glad you have been so smart as we will be needing the oxen to go for lumber this afternoon. When you have unloaded the wagon and fed them I will have the fence started so you can work on it while I am away, for I know you are anxious to be getting it done. Isabell will have dinner early and if we are late getting back it will be moonlight. When we get ready for the trip to Pittsburgh you and Belle can both go. I want to get every thing necessary for the carpenter's work so he can

be going on without being hindered, after he assists in selecting the lumber and getting nails, which I hope we can find on this trip.

"It will not be long until the sound of the hammer and saw will be heard, then we will do the rest of the hauling ourselves, and I will help the carpenter when I can. I am thinking it will be a busy fall for us for the cellar will be to dig, and the apples nearly ready to pick. I know where we can get stone for the wall, such nice smooth ones, and not very far to haul."

"I am glad we are going to have use for them," said Frank; "as we can have brick for the chimney now."

"Yes I remember how you were interested seeing the men molding brick for a kiln to be burned soon," said his father. "I believe it was near Steubenville."

The way to the lumber yard was made as fast as they could get the great lazy oxen to travel. Returning more slowly with the well loaded wagon.

CHAPTER V.

THE WOODS ROAD.

“WELL,” said the carpenter; “ I enjoy traveling on a road like this if we do have to go slow. The trees and undergrowth so thick on either side it appears to be enclosed by a green wall as far ahead as you can see. Then the tall trees far above us where the sun is shining, and so many birds have their leafy homes, giving us plenty of music all the way. I can appreciate a road, and consider the work of making one after being lost in a great woods where the trees stand so close together. I have heard that of all the land in the west that has been cleared so far, none is better, or more beautiful than the Ohio Valley.”

“Yes,” replied the farmer; “but we have such great accounts from travelers of the rolling prairie country, all covered with grass and without a tree or bush for miles; as far as the eye can see. It must be wonderful. It occurs to me, however, that one might tire of the sameness. You know while you admire this road though the level part of the country, if it had been the same all the way, it wouldn’t be as enjoyable. Somehow we see things better or appreciate them more when we contrast them with something else. Now we soon come to the hills and our road winding around the steeper ones and going over others, crossing the streams of running water, with rocks on either side, and the sound

of waterfalls in the distance makes a variety. We anticipate something new as to scenery no matter how long our journey may be. I think we have as great a variety in this part of the country as can be found anywhere, as far as scenery is concerned."

"Oh! yes," said the younger man; "and we can by a little stretch of imagination get a glimpse of what it will be when the forest is cleared out. I hope when that time comes a few of the most perfect trees will be left standing besides the woodland."

"Yes when we are clearing out the undergrowth, so the grass can grow, we have our choice of trees to let stand. "Yes, and I am sparing the most perfect of the younger ones to take the place of the grand old oaks, hickories, poplars, beech, maples and others. That is one part of our clearing you have not seen. It is on the west end of the farm, on the side of the road toward Columbus. You will pass there on your way farther west. When not employed in clearing land for cultivation of crops we have a little spare time and I enjoy working on that, as it is not so destructive as making a clean sweep. It requires the cutting and burning of so many fine trees. Now that saw mills are being established, I suppose we will be able to get something for the very best of the large logs, though many that would have made the finest kind of lumber have been all rolled together and consumed."

"Yes," said the young carpenter; "I am glad a few men understand and are willing to save what may be useful for generations to come. Most of them in their eagerness for cleared land do not consider the future. Their own needs are paramount and the work of clearing the land more worthy their best effort than any-

thing else at this time. Possibly it may be true, when we consider the time and strenght required to clear even one field properly."

"You are right in regard to the hard labor required and judging from my own experience it will take several generations of stalwart men to make farms of these western states, such as they should be. Many of them will be covered with stumps that will take many years to decay and few men will have the courage to dig them up."

"Well," said the carpenter; "again my hobby is tools to work with. This thing of digging them out with a hoe never suited me. I suppose when people have more time to think, they will find easier ways to accomplish such hard work."

"I see," said the other. One of the laws of our being is to become attached to whatever costs us the most in labor or pain. So many men will love the acres on which they have toiled for so many years until, worn out, they rest, and their works follow them."

"Well," said the carpenter; "you have spoken of the worn out body and the benefit bestowed on others by his labor. Will that do him any good when the time comes for him to leave it all?"

"Yes, my friend, that is a serious question, and like many others pertaining to our life here, I have never found but one that was able to give a satisfactory answer. Therefore, I must refer you to the Gospel of St. Luke, 12th Chapter, from the 15th to the 23rd verse."

"When you pass around that next turn in the road, if you look away to the left, far above that knoll and above the cliff overlooking the river, you can see what was once our home—Blue Belle's and mine—beneath

the upper stratum is a cave under those large rocks hidden away from the view of even a close observer. In that great room with its walls of solid rock we liked and loved, with naught to make us afraid. There our children came to us and were cared for through their helpless years, and taught to take their first steps under our protecting, guiding hands, until they could walk. We had the great pleasure of teaching them to talk. Of course, the first they can remember was of playing on the moss covered rocks, imbedded in the ground, so like a soft green carpet under the shade of the trees growing farther back from the cliff, their mother's favorite play ground in her childhood.

"Nearby was the wild grapevine swing, from which I first heard the voice and musical laughter of Blue Belle, mingled with that of her Indian companions. That was many years ago. I was being led a prisoner on the Indian trail far below. I can not describe my never to be forgotten feeling for the uplift as it came to me, like a ray of sunshine." He was lost in thought until near the summit of the steep part of the road.

The oxen left to themselves ceased to move. The young carpenter gazed up at the higher hills and walls of rock, then far out into the more level country a vast wilderness on their right, and could now look down on the trees that had towered so far above him when he seemed hopelessly lost.

"Was it last evening I was wandering there so near that clearing? Plain enough a spot of civilization when viewed from this higher ground."

Suddenly his companion aroused from his reverie. Grasping his whip he called out to his team each one by name. They soon reached the summit where a brisk

breeze fanned their cheeks and the oxen moved down the hill at a much faster pace, while he continued his narrative.

"One evening after a busy day I sat down beside her on a great moss covered rock, overlooking the river. She laid aside the little moccasin she was forming and listened as I talked of the past. While I spoke of the time I have been telling you of, the voices of our children enjoying the same free happy time brought it vividly before me. Singing, shouting and laughing as she and her companions did on that memorable day.

"Then we talked of our experience from that time forward and our remarkable deliverance from the Indians. Intuition must have directed our conversation on that last evening we spent together. For years after I lived it over and over again. It was a sacred time. The silence that followed was suddenly broken when she sprang to her feet and cried out; "Oh! Look at the Fort."

"I turned my gaze as she pointed to Fort Necessity, and saw for the first time our United States Flag as it waved above the Fort with its stripes of red, white and blue and in one corner the thirteen stars representing each state.

"While we sat down and watched the floating object the children joined us. As twilight deepened into night and the stars above us came out and gleamed in its bright folds, the moon arose, shining over the forest and the sparkling waves of the river below.

"Then amid that quiet scene we heard the sound of cannon in the distance. At first, far toward the east, growing louder until the response from our own Block House resounded through the hills, jarring the earth beneath and around us.

"We had been hearing, even in our isolated home, many startling accounts, such as precede the uprising of an indignant people from the south and the east, reaching westward. We were expecting the signal for a call to arms, if repeated, to come at once. What wonder that we held our breath. But scarcely had the echo of the first died away in the hills until the second came with its urgent call for men to gather at the Block House. You know what followed when the war for freedom began. The trials and privations we had to bear through all these years can never be told, or the courage of the great hearts who led us on to victory and freedom.

"I had the bravest little woman to leave behind me ready and glad to provide and care for our children and let me go that we might do our part in contending for a country of our own. The children were old enough to assist their mother in providing game for meat and in utilizing the soil for corn and vegetables. Neither of us had time to nurse our grief at being separated, so I took my gun and hastened away to join my comrades in the war.

"After it was all over I returned and found my little wife at our cave home to greet me. She was unchanged in her affection or appearance, but the children were almost grown, and treated me as if I were a stranger for a few days. We were soon united again, the severed tied stronger, if possible, than ever.

"You see when the government land was deeded to me I requested to have this in connection with my portion as a soldier of the revolution, as I would apprec-

iate that hill with its great rocks more than my comrades could.

"If Blue Belle had to stay away as long as I did during the war I think I could scarcely be able to keep up as well as she did, but she knew how to manage the wild beasts and the Indians would never disturb her.

"While away I visited my own people and was over most of the eastern states, as they are called now. My experience then rather spoiled me for my backwoods life here. I have aspirations for seeing more of what is going on in the world. I should like to take at least one trip abroad. Then Frank and Isabel ought to have a better opportunity for book learning, as the young people are having now in some parts of the east."

"Well," said his companion; maybe you can sell out and go back east to live."

"No, I think Blue Belle would rather stay here, now permanent settlements are being established. As Ohio is one of the States of the Union and with the capital at Columbus, great changes will soon be taking place in this part of the country. By working hard and holding on to this good land we will have something worth while in the years to come."

They were coming out of the woods now and the light of the moon shining over the clearing and fields, the dim light from the oil papered windows of the log house in front of the orchard and barn, the barking of the watch dog in response to the lowing of the oxen and the sound of the wagon, reminded them their trip for the first load of lumber would be ended when they had drawn

it up near the house to be unloaded, where they expected to begin work on the morrow.

When they turned into the lane they could see Frank and Isabel standing in the door, as they had been watching for them since dark.

When Frank came out to care for the oxen he said "supper is waiting." He had finished the pen before dark but the hogs had not come yet and he expected his father would have to sound the signal to bring them in.

CHAPTER VI.

BLUE BELLE PREPARING TO RETURN HOME.

WHILE her loved ones are planning everything possible that can add to the comfort or pleasure of her arrival, quite another experience is going on in one of the wigwams of the Miamis in the far west.

The earnest women of her band, as she called them, had gathered in to see their much loved Muncy—as they supposed—for the last time, the only one remaining of their honored Chief Half Moon's family. Few there were among them who could not remember some acts of kindness she had bestowed on them during the long years in which she had sympathized with them in time of trouble, comforting and advising as a wise mother comforts and advises her children. As she sat on the robes with Blue Belle they entered and formed circles around them.. With tears and sobs they beckoned to their leader to speak for them.

Responding she said, "We have come to plead with you to stay with us. Your father, mother and brother are all gone, but that makes it harder for us to let you go. You have a good wigwam and plenty of horses and cattle. Oh! Stay with us."

While Muncy listened her eyes rested lovingly on Blue Belle. Then she arose and replied:

"Dear women and children I am sorry to leave you. I want you to understand that while I love you as my

people, I am bound to this white sister by closer ties. She is all that is left to me of our family. We played together on the banks and over the hills of our old hunting grounds. We shared the same blanket; everything father and mother gave us, their children. We grew up together and she is as my own sister. As a child I loved little Blue Belle with her merry ways. When we were older and had more serious thoughts we shared them with each other. When a young pale face was captured and brought to our village by our band, she saw him and pled with father to save his life. When I saw how she felt I gave my influence to save him, as you know, and he came, in time, to be one of us. He taught us the language of his people and was like a brother to me. When she told me she cared more for him than any body she knew I kept her secret. She cared for me much as ever but she loved him in a different way.

“Father and mother were troubled when they saw how her mind and affection were going out after the interesting young pale face, mostly on my brother’s account. It spoiled all their plans for him and he was becoming desperate. They began plotting a way to get rid of her lover and not let her know, so that she would think some accident had occurred while out on a hunt. I told her when we were alone, in our hiding place on the hill, and we stored away provision for them in the cave and were planning some way to hide him until they could escape, for he was more than life to her. Our scheme did not work as my brother or some of our band were watching him day and night. Our anxiety came to an end when the English army came suddenly upon us with thousands of armed men. The war whoop was

given and soon all was confusion. We were in the midst of a great battle. Our warriors took their places behind banks and trees, while the Red Coats, with their great shining weapons, were in plain view and piles of them were soon slain.

"Right in the beginning of the contest I saw Jehu Bailey run for his horse and taking Blue Belle, ride swiftly down the Indian trail into the forest.

"Well, we heard of my brother, Oceola, once. Some one reported having seen him at a French Fort.

"The war continued until the French left and sailed down the river and were on their way to France.

"Blue Belle and her lover fled to her favorite Fort and were married before her friends were driven away. We Indians had to leave our homes and hunting grounds and come west as you know. But they found a home in the forest and lived there ever since until a few moons ago, Blue Belle came to see my mother, and together we did all we could for her. Finally she ceased to suffer and went to sleep to wake no more here.

"Now I have told you and you who have sisters will surely understand how I feel, that I must go with her back to their Forest Home. If it is the will of the Great Spirit I will come to you again. Your men have given me money for my cattle and the horses, except the ones we will take with us. I want to divide the robes we have to leave and some other things among you."

"Yes we will take care of them while you are gone, when you come again they will be yours."

"As you wish dear women. You may know or feel more of what the future may have in store for us than I do at this time." Assisted by Blue Belle she spent the remainder of the evening giving to each one according

to their needs. Before they left the wigwam they all gave vent to their grief by a loud, long wail. Taking up the gifts, with bowed heads, silently they went away to their own wigwams. Muncy and Blue Belle hastily arranging their bed were soon settled down to sleep, hoping to rise early and be off before the people in the village began to move in the morning.

When they awoke before the dawn of day, or the song of a bird was to be heard, they arose, had a light breakfast, packed their saddle bags with the food they had been preparing for several days—boiled and dried meats, fruit, hominy and parched corn; everything that would be good without having to cook on the way.

As Blue Belle had noticed on the journey with the Missionaries that any places suitable for stopping over night were many miles apart, they must make good use of daylight if they avoided having to stay on the plains or in the great woods alone when night came on.

“One thing that is encouraging the farther we go the better the roads and settlements. It was just the other way when we journeyed westward.” she said to Muncy when she came in from feeding the horses. “If your Territory had been much farther west we could not have undertaken to make the long journey alone.”

“Oh. yes,” said Muncy; “we hear so much of terrible things going on farther west. It is hard to tell who is the more cruel, the Indians or their enemies, the Mexicans. The red men of the Comanche Tribe are great warriors and have but little mercy on travelers who fall in their way, especially the ones that are not red, as they think they are Mexicans and ought to be killed. If we were to fall in their hands, we could never get away. I hope we will live to reach your family and the

old hunting ground on the Ohio hills where we played so long ago.

"Then I know your good man and your children will be waiting and watching for us there. The ones who call you mother, and I have never seen, must be nearly grown up now."

"Yes indeed they will, and I must surely get there and spend many happy days in my comfortable home. To be taken and kept prisoner away from them is not to be thought of, for they would never know what had become of us.

"Now," said Muncy, "the horses must be done eating and everything is ready to load them with. We will bring them out. I know it would be easier traveling if we just had the ponies to ride, but we have so much to take, and these pack horses are used to being loaded and are so gentle."

"Come White Face. Come Star. We are going on a long journey." They led them close to the door of the wigwam where they could fill the large wallets after putting them on their backs.

Just then a robin above their heads began his morning song, and Muncy exclaimed. "Oh! There is my bird. He sings up there every morning just at this time." All the time they tucked the things in the bags, hanging low on the horses sides, and secured them with ropes and straps. The robin sang just as gaily as it would if she were just waking from her night's sleep and not going away.

"Now you can see him in that branch of the tree that reaches out over the wigwam. No wonder his notes always sounded so near. Do you think he will



"Goodbye, little robin red breast."

stay here when there is no one to be wakened early, or at all, when all the family are gone?"

"I am sure I can not tell. You do think of such odd things, Muncy."

"Good-bye little robin red breast," she called; as they started down the path toward the forest.

The only reply was a fresh outburst of song. "Be cheery, be cheery." As the sound grew fainter Muncy's chin dropped lower and she seemed lost in thought.

"Are you sorry to leave the new hunting ground?"

"Oh no. Father and mother are both gone and you feel nearer to me than any one here, unless Lightfoot should return."

"Yes, I would like to know what did become of him," said Blue Belle.

"Well they disappeared, he and his father, many years ago and none of our tribe could find any trace of them, so gave them up. I can not forget. It has been lonesome ever since. They will surely never come back now, and I will feel better to go back to Ohio with you. We can go over the places I loved in our girlhood days. Up and down the streams where we waded and played among the pebbles. I want to see that great deep gorge and the cave we found where we used to hide, and kept our own secret when they tried to find where we had been. We often sat up there in the rocks listening to the strange sounds of waterfalls below. Peering away down into the dark caverns we thought we listened to sounds of people talking. Surely odd persons they must be to stay away down in that mysterious underworld."

"Yes," said Blue Belle, "our old play ground is much the same and I am so happy we are on our way home."

Of course, you have lived here for many years and we will become attached to the country where we live. I have spent the most of my life in the forest among the Ohio hills. This is a beautiful country, and maybe we can come here again sometime if you wish."

"No, dear Blue Belle, it is a long way to travel. All your interest is there where we may spend the rest of our days. I think I shall be satisfied to never return unless you wish to come on your own account."

CHAPTER VII.

BLUE BELLE ON HER WAY HOME.

“YOU have no idea how much I missed you, but I have had the satisfaction of being useful to my people. Have always been so glad I had the opportunity to learn the English language. I have been teaching the boys and girls, but the best part was being able to talk with the Missionaries who came to visit us, and to be able to serve as interpreter for them when they came so far with no other object than to be our friends and bring messages of love from the Great Spirit. I know from what they have done for us that they love us. They leave their home away back in the east every year. They always have good horses but it is a long journey over the mountains and across the states to our Territory. They come with no selfish motive, only from a sense of duty, and to keep their appointment with the Meeting of Friends who send them on their mission, with their prayers and concern for their safe return following them. They visit several tribes. Among these are the Winebagos, Omahas, Pawnees and some others.

“They tell us we all have our Great Father who loves us, that we are all brothers and sisters and ought to live together in harmony, as God is kind and provides good things for us all.

“How I did like to hear them talk. Then as I repeated it to the ones who could not understand what they

said, it caused me to remember more than would have been possible any other way. When we get with your family and can talk that way all the time I will enjoy it so much. It will remind us of the times when your lover was teaching us both to talk as he did."

"Yes, indeed," said Blue Belle, "I love to think of the good old times. When we all get together he will like to hear us talk of them, too, and will remember some things we have forgotten."

"Well we are coming in sight of the plains now. It will be more comfortable riding as it is nice and smooth and we can travel side by side. When these paths are used a long time they get worn so deep, new ones have to be made through the tall tangled grass, as the water washes the old ones in times of big rains."

"I had not thought of that," said Blue Belle; "I see they make the new one near enough to lead a horse along the other. Several of them make a trail as far as we can see," she continued, laughing, "and I am glad they are already made."

"Yes," said Muncy, "the young braves always like something difficult to accomplish. Of course, we are willing they should do this. I wish you could see them racing their ponies across the prairie, their heads decorated with bright colored feathers fluttering above the green waving grass as they go bounding forth over miles and miles of this open country, how many I can not say, before we lose sight of them. Yet these boys are not trained to minister to others. Their first recollection had been of seeing their fathers kill game and let it lay, pointing out the direction to their mothers, who were experts in finding and dressing it ready for use. When out on a hunt, in times of breaking camp to move farther

on where game is more plentiful, the women carry their tents while the men go untrammelled that they may be ready to use their bows and arrows on a moment's notice. He is taught to protect his tribe and kill the game.

"It is not necessary for me to tell you these things as you grew up with us, but you have been with the white people so long I had almost forgotten you had been one of us. I remember how different your lover was from our men. He was always ready to lift and carry the heaviest loads and give us his hand when we had a rock to mount, or foot logs to cross over creeks, or deep gorges between the hills. I have been trying to get the boys in our band to be more like he was. The women and girls are not like the ones he had been brought up with. They are as stout as their brothers and never expect them to do what they are able to do themselves."

"Oh yes," said Blue Belle, "the training makes such a difference. You see when he was with your people he sat with us around the fire when it was cold. Our best seats were robes and our wigwams seldom clear of smoke, because it had no place to escape through the roof. After we were married, though we have always lived in the forest, he knew how to make our home comfortable, and felt free to do his best with the few things he had to work with. We never strapped our babies on a board, for he made a nice little bed, or cradle he called it, out of a log, leaving the under side smooth and round. The upper side was hewed out like a box so they could not roll out. We lined it with bear skin and I gathered the softest leaves and ferns for the little bed; then I found enough of that pretty cotton for a pillow. You know the kind we used to play with when we were children."

"Yes," said Muncy, "I always admired it so much, when the big green pods were opened to let the white fluffy cotton come out."

"Well, you must know I thought about that and wished you were with me to hold the little skin case so I could get the unruly stuff in, for it took lots of it for one little pillow, but it was so nice when it was made, just right for the wee baby. When the weather was cold we had the same kind of warm soft skins your father had for our little bed. Then we both sat and watched him as he cuddled down in them, and gave us his sweetest smiles while we moved his cradle gently until he was asleep. We felt nearer to the kingdom, and to each other, as we sat there and gazed on our innocent babe. My husband said; "Can we realize that we have before us God's best and richest gift and entrusted to our care? So much depends on our being able to keep the little body perfect as He has created it; bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh."

"Yes," said Muncy, "and you were successful in getting them through their babyhood without the use of a board to protect the delicate, wonderful organism, which if injured, undoes for life God's perfect workmanship, the physical body."

"Well, of course, we know the reason for your people strapping their papooses to a board. Jehu said it would be impossible to care for them through infancy any other way. With the Indian habits and out door life the little ones have to rough it with the grown ups. To tell the truth I am glad my home life is different from what it could have been with the red people. I have no wish to go back to the old time habits.

"Say Muncy don't you think we had best look out for a place to stop and feed the horses and have our dinner?"

"Yes to be sure and I think we can get to Logan Creek by noon, that is such a beautiful place. The shade will be so pleasant after traveling so far on the prairie."

Blue Belle dropping her rein let her pony halt while she gazed over the great expanse of country around them. "My!" said she, "What a beautiful country. This must be the garden of the world. I scarcely believe you will be satisfied back there in the hills after living in a place like this so many years."

"Yes," said Muncy, "we all enjoy this part of the west very much, especially during the hunting season when we camped on the banks of the creek or river, where the cottonwood trees make such fine shade."

"Look! Muncy, what is that?" said Blue Belle, pointing to their left across the prairie. They had seen a drove of buffalo far away on their right. Had passed a mound occupied by little dogs, and stopped to water their horses at a spring where several little animals scampered away in the grass as they approached. Otherwise the plains had appeared clear of everything but the green waving grass,

Now they could see a string of bright plumage moving swiftly eastward where they expected to reach the creek in a short time themselves. She gazed for a time in silent wonder, then turned to her red sister for an answer.

"It is Indians," she said, riding swiftly on the south trail. "They will be camping on the bank of the creek by the time we reach there. Of course, we will come in farther up and may not be disturbed, but those feathers

look too much like savages out on the war path. There are some tribes not far from here I should fear, as we are alone, if they got their eyes on us, would take us prisoners and get what we have."

"Oh dear, that would be dreadful," said Blue Belle, as the color left her face. "Do you suppose they saw us and will waylay us? Muncy, Muncy, what shall we do? If we turned back they could overtake us on the plains."

But Muncy who had been leaning forward with upturned face silently watching the moving string of riders now turned to her white sister with a smile of relief on her habitually grave face.

"Do not be alarmed. I see something familiar in the motion of that set. I have seen them before while rigged out in feathers. I believe them to be our own boys. We can go on without fear now I am sure. See we are near enough to the creek to see the beautiful trees that cover its banks."

"I am glad of that, for since my scare is over I find I am hungry," said Blue Belle. "Exercise in such air as this makes one long for something good and fresh, like boiled turkey or venison, but I guess anything we have will taste good."

While they talked and urged their ponies forward they entered and passed over the Valley of Logan Creek, enjoying the refreshing breeze, under the shade of the great trees down to the sparkling water. The ponies of their own accord quickened their pace to a run over the bank to the edge of the creek, where the riders drew rein and sprang to the ground, releasing the thirsty ani-

mals that they might enjoy the water flowing at their feet.

As they stood stroking them with leaves plucked from the branches of the trees, they suddenly became aware that a camp-fire was burning farther down the creek, as they could see the smoke rising above the trees.

"What do you think of that, Muncy? No one lives near here does there?"

"No, it must be travelers or hunters who have come in on the south trail. We'll not have to start a fire. We had best make haste and get our horses fed, and have our lunch as soon as possible so we can be going on our way."

But before they could relieve their horses of their burdens ready to rub the sweat from their bodies, that they might get rested sooner, without taking cold with the sudden change from their exercise on the open plain to the dense shade of the trees, through which the cool breezes were passing, merry shouts fell on their ears. Looking in the direction from which they came a number of boys were seen coming up the creek running as they shouted. When near enough to be heard they called out, "Aunt Muncy did you think you could slip away like that, after all your kindness to us?" Others were saying, "We thought we would find you here at the end of this trail. Want you come and eat dinner with us. No mustn't object. It not far, all ready too. We take care of horses, leave them here. You go?"

"Yes," said Muncy, "since you have gone to all this trouble and it is not far, we will not refuse your warm dinner."

"Well, you not wait. We tend horses so they eat grass, not get loose. We overtake you," said the leader.

They had not gone far when they heard the voices of the other boys and saw them moving around the fire near a log, which had the bark peeled off, making a nice seat,

"My! did you ever smell any thing as good as that turkey?" said Blue Belle. "See they are broiling them at the fire on the sticks. What a fine bed of coals they have." The young cooks with faces flushed with heat turned to greet them as they came near.

"Well, you boys have sure enough prepared a surprise dinner," said Muncy.

"Our Mamies helped us with the cakes and things, for you see we just had to do something when we heard you were going away. We held a counsel last night and we decided to have dinner for you. We stayed up late getting ready. We knew where we could find the turkeys as we had been watching and followed them to their roosting place several days ago. All we had to do was to get out there early in the morning with our bows and arrows and bring down as many as we wanted."

"Now," said their leader, "these dodgers, potatoes and roasting ears are all done brown. You can take them out boys for the turkey is ready."

Blue Belle who was watching them brush away the live coals, and take off the wrapping of leaves as they placed the corn on the bark platters and raked the potatoes out and placed them on others, said, "What nice potatoes you have and everything looks as good as it smells."

"We made these out of the bark we took off the trees and we have smaller ones for you and Aunt Muncy to have on your laps."

They had the logs placed just far enough apart to enable them to reach the dinner when the platters were placed on the leaves between them. When the boys who had been caring for the horses came and all were seated on the logs they bowed their heads for the silent thanks the Father Onas Man had requested them to observe.

They had given the guests all the plates they had time to make so they helped themselves, feeling they had been greatly honored, while they praised the young men and boys for being so kind and thoughtful in preparing such a great feast for them.

"These potatoes are good enough for the President, or maybe you would say the Chief or Medicine man. I never tasted better turkey."

"We will remember this dinner as long as we live," said Muncy, "and when we think of it we will think of you."

"Well," said the leader, "we all enjoyed having some part in getting it up. Our little brothers and sisters, who could not come, cracked the nuts and picked out the kernels and parched this corn. They said they wanted you to take these on your journey. The girls sent these boxes and baskets they had made themselves. I think you will find some of their names worked in some of them. These are their presents."

By this time Muncy's feelings were fast overcoming her, for these boys she had been teaching all these years to show their gratitude in this way was comforting to her lonely heart. The message and the presents

from the dear girls and children she was leaving, then all the bright papooses she had nursed and loved had a place in her affectionate nature. She was moved to tears which coursed down her cheeks for some moments, tears she could not stay. Then suddenly she straightened up, a look of resolution on her thoughtful face. She had overcome the tender feeling and was her genial self again. Her great dark eyes glowed as she talked to her young friends, giving these young brothers of her tribe just the mental food for which they longed, her plain coarse featured face becoming radiant with the joy of the inner life which she possessed and was able to impart to these who felt nearer than she had before realized. The meal over, and the spiritual food received, all arose and gathered around the fire for a few parting words.

Surely they were a fine set of young men and boys; tall and straight with bright eyes, Roman noses and firmly set lips. Their intelligent brown faces marked them as one of the best tribes of a race of people who always remembered a kindness and in their own strength could never forgive an injury. They were taught to suffer but could never be made to endure servitude or betray a friend, for whom they were willing to give their lives if required.

"Who will be interpreter when you are gone, and Father Onas' people come to visit us as they do every year?"

"Why some of you can I feel sure. You must have your own experience and you can get that better when you have no one to rely on. Yet I must say what I now feel in my soul. I will come back to you some day, if it is God's will that I should."

At this expression of feeling from the revered Muncy, a shout of joy went up from all the boys and they danced around the two sisters who now stood waiting until the young athletes had given vent to their feeling by lasting cheers.

"Oh, my sister," said Blue Belle,, holding Muncy's hands in her own with tightening grasp, "you will go home with me but the forest hills in Ohio can not hold you long after all this demonstration. Your people can not let you go away to stay."

"But you must remember," replied Muncy, "you have a family and I am sure I will be with you for a time, to live over again, in a measure, the joys of our childhood. But see, Sunbeam is getting the boys quiet and we must be going now."

The boys hurridly gathered up what remained of the dinner, and placed the best of the turkey and cakes with the trinkets brought for the travelers. However, one of the younger set had something on his mind but was too much embarrassed, or at least they would not understand him, his English was so broken. Maybe he was thinking the boys would make fun of him. When Muncy took him to one side and encouraged him to tell her he did so in his own way. He told her he was thinking about Blue Belle. That she was not like their women, who were all coarse-featured and dark like the men, yet the Indian braves all admired pretty white women, and if any of them saw Blue Belle they would capture them and their horses to get her. He knew she would rather go back to her own man and papooses than to be a queen in any of the Indian tribes.

When she asked him what he thought they could do to avert the danger, he told her what had best be done.

That was to paint and put feathers on her just like they do an Indian Queen, so no one would be attracted by her beauty. Then he thought they would be safe like two Indians traveling eastward. She told him she thought they were taking a great risk going alone. Blue Belle who overheard most of what they said, and could understand better than he knew, joined them and urged with Muncy that she had best be painted and put on the Indian garb. She praised the boy for his thoughtfulness which comforted him much as he thought it might offend her to say anything about the matter. Then she smiled and sat down on the log asking them in their own language to decorate her as they would if she were their own queen. The boy on whom the concern had rested produced the paint he had carried with him. They took feathers from their own caps for hers. With charcoal and white of an egg her golden tresses were changed in color but could not be made straight.

"Well, she will look like Indian when she have cap on."

"Yes," said Blue Belle, "I will wear that all the time when riding."

When the painting was finished, her cap placed on her head and a red blanket over her shoulders, they all declared they never would have known it was Blue Belle. Even her eyes looked changed, and her white teeth more like pearls than they had before the face and hair were changed in color.

When they were all satisfied that she would pass for an Indian, they started up the creek taking the things they had brought with them, with plenty of turkey, nut kernels and everything they could get them to take.

When they were ready to go on their way the boys who had crossed the creek with them stood looking sad. The young Chief said they would like to go farther with them, see them cross big waters—the Mississippi River—but they told them they would have to go a long way before they reached that. They would find a way to cross that would be safe as many white settlers lived and had big boats at the place. With all the encouraging words that could be thought of they bade them adieu and went on their way alone.

When they had gone quite a distance, each one busy with her own thoughts they reached the higher ground and looking back could see the boys still standing on the bank of the creek.

Muncy said, "They will watch us until we are out of sight then they will go back to the camp and linger there till evening, fishing and playing in the water; then eat their supper before going back to the village. When they all gather around the camp fires to-night they will have much to tell their mothers, sisters and little brothers. They will dwell on the fact of our thinking they were savage Indians when we saw them speeding across the plains on the south trail.

Yes, I can just hear them jabbering away in their own tongue. What one of them don't think of another will, and the papooses strapped to their boards on the bank, or leaning against the huts, will kick and laugh as if they understood it all."

"Well," said Blue Belle, "when they are back among their own people and have their usual sports, young folks like them soon forget their disappointments. New things are coming up every day to attract them. While we are holding in our minds just how we left

them, they are enjoying the present and are so much more free from care than we are now so far from our home."

"Well," said Muncy, "our horses had such a good rest in the middle of the day they will be able to travel late, but I hope we will find shelter before night, as we would have to make a fire and stay up on account of the wolves."

"Yes the great woods we will be going through seemed to have very few settlements," said Blue Belle.

Urging their ponies to a faster gait they sped along in silence for several hours, passing great herds of buffalo and other wild animals grazing on the plains. Their horses growing weary at last they had to let them rest, though as yet no shade was in sight and the sun was getting low in the west. Soon they urged them forward again for a time and the great rolling plains would soon be left behind them.

"Oh this beautiful country! I will surly never forget this sight. I dread to enter the great woods and follow the single trail again," said Blue Belle.

"Don't be discouraged," said Muncy. "If you could see how you look maybe you would not be afraid. I will lead and maybe we will come to a habitation ere long. Entering the shade of the great forest, daylight faded faster than they perceived. In the cool of the evening as twilight came on, their horses sped forward with renewed energy, and as the shadows thickened among the tall trees of the great woods, Blue Belle strained her eyes to keep sight of her leader, speeding on and on.

At length she cried out. "Oh, stop! For pity's sake stop, stop!" She had already heard the weird but well known howl of a grey wolf in the distance, far

to the left, with the fearful answer of another on the right.

Muncy is going faster now and without checking her horses for a moment calls back to her to make the horses do their best. It is a race for life with us now. Urging them forward she took new courage, for a few moments as their speed increased. Suddenly her pony reared as the pack horse leaped against them. Looking back she saw a great shaggy creature clinging to his side. She raised her pistol and fired when it fell to the ground. They sped on but others were closing in upon them. She quickly threw out the turkey and other things the boys had added to their provision and gained a little space while they fought over it.

They had no need of whip or spur as the horses darted forward with a full sense of the danger. Faster and faster but with every bound the hideous cry of the wild beasts sounded closer. The crisis had come.

Blue Belle saw no way to escape, brave as she was. It was evident a pack of hungry wolves were now aroused. The great woods resounded with their dismal howls. In a short time they would be devoured, leaving no trace for their friends to know what had become of them. But she would follow Muncy as long as she could, in her flight, as she never halted for a moment. She had seen a light in the distance before them and hoped they could reach it in time to be saved. In answer to Blue Belle's cry of despair she called to her. "See the light? Look ahead! See that light? It is not far from us now."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ADVENT OF A STRANGER AT FOREST HOME.

THE busy weeks have passed quickly, and the inmates of Forest Home are counting the days when the travelers may arrive.

"I think Mammy will scarcely know the place when she gets here," said Isabel to her father, who was finishing the small front gate which would complete the enclosing of the yard. A few days before she had watched the young carpenter depart on his journey westward, after completing the building of their new home as they had planned. It was now furnished as nearly as she and her father and brother could do anything of such importance. They all agreed that the finishing touches would have to be done by mother.

"She will find everything in the old house just about as she left them, for we have changed nothing but the windows. I can not realize how we did get along with the paper ones. I am so glad to have the glass, for I can wash them clean and then rub them until they shine. Everything looks so cheerful when the sunshine comes into the rooms. I am so delighted with the new rooms and the pretty carpets and curtains. Oh, Daddy, I can hardly believe myself, that it is our home."

As she tripped down the path and sat down on one of the seats in the portico she closed her eyes and thought "Oh! How I wish Mammy was here. Nothing makes

home without her. I think this lonely feeling would go away if they were here.

"Well that is finished," said her father; gathering up the tools and coming to the house. "I will be ready to help Frank with the apples now."

"No you must rest awhile. He is getting along fine. Said they would soon all be picked and he would be ready to dig potatoes to-morrow. I will put these away for you. I suppose the carpenter work is finished," she said with a little sigh.

Her father replied, "I believe you enjoy having the work going on better than seeing it finished."

"Oh, no. This would be a dull world if we had no work to do. Look! Daddy, somebody is coming down our lane from the road. My, but he has a fine horse and rig." The stranger was coming closer now. "He is not a young man, but real nice looking."

"Yes," said her father, "I believe I saw that very man on the street when we were in Pittsburg. But I am puzzled to know what brings him here," and he hastened out to meet him.

"Good day sir. I wish to inquire if this is where Jehu Bailey lives," said the stranger, lifting his hat and bowing to Isabel's father. Seeing her he alighted quickly, as her father answered in the affirmative. Securing his horse he entered the yard and came toward the house to meet her, his face lighting up after the manner of one who recognizes a long absent friend or relative.

"Is this your daughter,?" with trembling voice he questioned. Every particle of color had left his face, his slender form swayed backward and he would have fallen had it not been for strong arms thrown out to support him. Together father and daughter brought

him into the house. When they had placed him in one of the large comfortable chairs, his now helpless head resting on a pillow, Jehu sent Isabel for water, telling her not to be frightened. She had never been where any one had fainted before. Water sprinkled on his face failed to revive the unconscious man.

"Tell your brother to come at once."

When he came and the spare bed was ready, lifting him carefully in their arms they carried him in and placed him upon it with the pillows laid aside that his head might be low. When his gaiters were removed, his cravat taken off and collar loosened and one on each side had chafed his limbs, with no sign of life, the father began to be alarmed.

"This is no ordinary fainting fit. His heart beats, otherwise I can see no sign of life. Something we do not understand has given him a terrible shock. If only old Dr. Green were here, he would open a vein and start up the circulation. But our fastest horse could not get him here from Columbus before morning, if we found him at home and able to come. I wish I had purchased a lance and could use it. He can not survive long unless we can do something ourselves. His heart begins to fail already. We must make use of our best knowledge to save him. Frank, start a fire in the living room and bring in a basket full of new corn. We'll get the kettle on and have the water hot when you get it here. We must lose no time or it will be too late. We will get him into a hot pack as soon as possible. I will lift his head while you place the pillows, so it may be even with the body. Isabel, now you can get the blankets and sheet, or a soft light quilt might be better, while I get the big kettle on the fire and bring in a tub and stir up the fire."

The water was steaming hot when Frank came with the corn. He said, "When I get half of it dipped into the tub you can put it in the kettle and push the fire together."

"Put blankets here where they will get warm and give me the sheet and quilt, Isabel; then you can start a fire in the kitchen and have boiling water in the teakettle, as it may be necessary to have something warm for him to drink. You understand we will call you as soon as you can assist in any way."

She soon had a fire and the teakettle humming in the way she loved to hear. She was not listening to that now her thoughts were of the mysterious stranger. Who was he and what brought him here, or caused the shock her father spoke of? Thought was soon changed to action as her father was calling her now. Hastening to the guest's room she found the still unconscious man swathed in blankets enclosing the ears of steaming hot corn.

Going closer she placed her cool soft hand on his forehead, smoothing back the locks of fine hair that now lay in dampened ringlets on his intellectual brow; then resting it there and looking at her father, she said; "did you ever see a sadder, sweeter face?"

As if it were the sound of her voice, or the touch of her hand, the silken lashes over his eyes began to move, then opened to gaze at the girl, his lips unclosed and he murmured. "Oh, Isabel, is it indeed you? How I have longed and longed to see your face again. And our little girl, did you know I have been searching for her these long years and never could get any trace of her. Can you tell me where she is now?" His voice was failing and his eyes closed as if with sleep.

"Isabel, dear, he must be kept quiet," said her father in a whisper. "Life has returned but his mind is wandering. How glad I am to see him breathe again. If he sleeps he will be all right, as that is nature's great restorer." While he imparted this to the children he had quietly left the room, Frank and Isabel following.

"If you have boiling water you can prepare some jamaica ginger, not too strong, and if he stirs again, we will give him a little with a teaspoon. Put plenty of cream and sugar in it. Frank you must help me get him out of the sweat gradually that he may not be chilled. You can rub his feet gently, while I remove the corn and get dry things around him. We must have the dry blanket heated and a hot brick to his feet. I hope we can get everything damp away without disturbing him."

When he was sleeping quietly they all went into the other room and sat down to rest. Isabel and her brother eager to have their father's opinion of the strange visitor.

"You may be surprised when I tell you he may be a very near relative of yours," said he. "He is a Frenchman of the finer type. You know your mother was taken from some settler's home when she was too young to know all of her own name. I have noticed all the years I have known her that she was interested in the French people. She told the Indians her name was Belle, and they gave her the name of Blue Belle, because her eyes were the color of the flower. Her right name might have been Isabel, as well as her mother's. Nothing short of a real likeness to some one he loved could have given him the shock he received when he looked in your face the first time. Then again, when the hot pack was reviving him, and you came to his bedside your voice

and touch aroused him. When he opened his eyes and saw you, the impression it made on him with what he said, confirmed my thoughts, that he was your mother's father, and that you resembled your grand-mother, his young wife whom he had loved and lost many years ago. If he recovers, it is my belief, we will learn more in connection with your mother's people than we have ever known."

"Do you think he will get well now, father?"

"Yes he is resting so quietly we have reason to believe the crisis is past, though such shocks are sometimes followed by a low fever with weeks of delirium. Nature has to struggle so long before the delicate organism involved can be restored. I hope our getting him relieved so soon will result favorably and that he will soon recover."

"I hope he will," said Frank, "and be able to be around when mother gets home. Belle thought we had a great surprise in waiting for her, but just think of this, if we have her father whom she has never heard of since she was a little child."

"Well, it is great. I hope it will not shock her," said Belle. "We just have to wait until she comes, for we have no way to send her word."

"No you need have no fear for your mother, children. It will be a great joy for her to find she has a father living. She was too young to remember her loss, while his would be felt by him all these years, making him unable to bear anything sudden. He has suffered many bitter disappointments in his search for her, looking for his child among the many tribes of Indians, while we have lived here in the forest contented and happy; the last place he was likely to look for her after the

Indians were all driven west from the Ohio Valley. He would never think of her getting away from the Indians, unless he could find her, and she might not be willing to leave them if he should.

"Well, Frank, we had better finish the apple picking while the weather is good. Belle can call me if he gets awake, but I think he will sleep until night, if not longer."

As it was not time to get supper, which would be simple, and was already planned, Isabel got out her work basket and was soon quietly seated on the new sewing chair by the west window of the room occupied by their invalid guest. She was soon engaged with the attractive work, making tulips by sewing the bright colored pieces of red and yellow to form the flowers on large ones cut in squares of muslin, bleached white, for the purpose. She had been working for sometime and hastened to complete a flower as the sun would soon be down. She was closely absorbed putting in the cotton with a little smooth stick, and noting the effect as the flower stems and leaves took on a natural appearance. This part of the work was so interesting that she ceased glancing toward the bed, as she was becoming accustomed to the quiet regular breathing of the sleeper, until a slight clearing of his throat caused her to look up and see that he was awake and gazing earnestly at her. Laying her work aside she hastened to his bedside.

"Is your name Isabel, and what is your age?" he questioned.

"Yes, that is my name," said she. "I will soon be seventeen years old."

"I have been thinking since I awoke and found my-

self in this comfortable bed. The first question was, 'Where am I, and how did I get here?' Then I saw you sitting by the window and the last I could remember was seeing you standing in a new portico. At sight of your face the past came back to me with such force, my head swam and everything grew dark. I must have been sleeping after that for I saw you in a dream or vision again. I know I am awake now. When I saw you sitting there, the last rays of the setting sun resting on your dark, bright wavy locks and the fair brow, it was the same I saw in my dream. I would think you were my long lost child, my dear little Belle, but if she is living she will be forty years of age next October and her eyes were a lovely blue when she was three years old. Yours are dark gray, or brown. I see in your face the likeness of my much loved young wife whom the cruel Indians killed. Where is our daughter I have sought for so long and hoped to find in this forest home, as I believed the Friend Missionary had put me on the right track at last. I feel that you must be my near kindred. Maybe her daughter."

The tears that had been trembling on the girls long eye lashes now dropped on his out-stretched hands, while she took them in both her own and kneeling down pressed them to her lips; then in a choking voice she replied, "Yes, oh yes, I believe you are my own dear grand-father."

A little later her father and brother coming in found Isabel with her head resting on the strangers breast, while he fondly stroked her soft brown locks. They stood for a few moments gazing on the interesting sight, then came forward to claim their own kinship with him.

Seeing his blue eyes he exclaimed, as the young

man approached the bed. "I believe you are my own grand-son." While tears of joy coursed down his furrowed cheeks as he held his hands in his while trying to realize the truth of his own words. Looking up at the face of his sympathizing son-in-law he exclaimed, "It was you who supported me when I was sinking into the darkness, but where is she? Where is my daughter, is she still alive? I can bear to hear the worst now from you. I feel sure these are her children and you their father, a white man and her husband. She is as near to you as she is to me."

As soon as Jehu could speak he told him his child was surely alive and well. That they were expecting her home from a long journey she had taken to the Indian Territory, to see the people with whom she had lived since childhood, where he had found her while a captive with the Indians himself. Adding, "It will be a comfort to you to find the woman your little Belle became, if she did grow up with the Indians. She is a lovely woman, but the riches of her mind are better than any outward appearances. The kind tender sympathy manifest in every word and act have been my greatest blessing all the years we have spent together."

"Well, I am rejoiced to know—if it is indeed she—that the precious child has become what her mother so much desired, a kind loving woman, and I am so glad she has a companion who can appreciate these good qualities. I can not express my gratitude to you as the rescuer of my daughter."

"Never mind, my dear sir, as I assure you I have been well paid for any part I may have had in the rescue," said Jehu, smiling. I think your mind must be relieved and you had better not talk any more to-night.

You have been very ill. If you are thirsty I will bring you a drink and we will bring your supper later. I hope you can be with us to-morrow."

When Isabel brought in his toast and milk she found him sleeping and quietly withdrew, after arranging it on the stand where he could reach it if he should get awake.

"He will need no light as the moon will shine into his room all night and father will be near enough to care for him."

When the evening work was all done he was still sleeping and they quietly retired for the night.

The next morning when he awoke he arose and dressed carefully, finding his baggage all placed in convenient order in his room. When about ready to join the new family of kin folks he could now hear moving around in the house, he felt a sense of physical weakness. Putting aside the curtain he raised the window higher and stood there enjoying the crisp October morning, until a knock came on his door and in response to his call to "come in" his genial host appeared with a cane in his hand.

"Why you are up already? Don't be discouraged if you are a little weak this morning. You are doing fine to be able to be up this soon. I thought yesterday you were not likely to survive from your sudden collapse. We did our best to bring you back to life, and I am glad indeed to find you up; and as the saying goes, 'Clothed and in your right mind' after yesterday's experience. I brought in this cane hoping you might feel like joining us at breakfast."

"Thank you. I am very glad to be able to do so," said

the stranger, as he followed Jehu to the kitchen and met Frank and Isabel with their pleasant greeting.

When they had taken their places around the table the great soul of their guest overflowed in thanksgiving that was both edifying and cementing to their new-found relationship. Then the family worship was completed by the father reading the XLVI Psalm in the well-worn book.

The stranger said, "Your confidence is surely great. This is one of many instances proving that human hearts have a sense given them which is more than outward evidence."

"Yes," said Isabel, "and I think mother's coming will bring to us in some way the manifested evidence."

"Yes," said her father, "and I trust every day is bringing her nearer to us, now they are on the way. This is such a fine morning, maybe you would be able to walk out with me and look around, as I expect our home here in the forest is something of a novelty to you."

"Yes, indeed, I am feeling stronger now, but I must not forget the cane." Frank handed it to him then he brought his hat and the two men were soon on their way toward the barn, while Frank and Isabel stood in the door looking after them.

"What do you think of him anyway, Frank?" said his sister.

"Why I think he is all right and I have already decided to have him for my grandfather whether we have proof of it or not."

"But how can we ever know anything more than we do now unless some of the Indains could tell us?"

"Aunt Muncy was some older than Mammy and

she could remember some things, or rather words she said, or maybe it was her Indian Mammy told them. But she knew who the Indian was who gave them little Blue Belle for their own."

"Well, it will all be talked over when they get here. But think of all the years that have passed and she has never heard anything about her people. Now suppose we call him grandfather and make him feel at home here."

"All right, Sis. He is a good man and a gentleman, and we can have him for our grandfather as long as he will stay with us."

And Isabel nodded her head approvingly.

CHAPTER IX.

A REVELATION.

LOOKING forward Blue Belle saw the light and took courage for a moment; but, oh horror! They were now overtaken by the whole pack of their pursuers. She heard Muncy shout, at the same time she was almost thrown from her pony. A great wolf had leaped on her shoulder, its hot breath was on her cheek. The sharp teeth only deterred by the fur on her neck from getting a fatal grip of her throat. This gave her time to get a firm hold of her trusty knife she had drawn from her belt and knowing where to strike, it suddenly rolled to the ground. When free she found they were in front of a cabin and in the midst of a terrible struggle. The door was wide open. Muncy's shout had been heard. A stalwart Indian had leaped out and was using his tomahawk, as only a practiced hunter could do in dispatching the wolves. His dogs were doing their best but there were too many for them and the famished creatures were not giving way.

She saw Muncy under one of the horses, by the light that came from the door. Each time one of the wolves sprang on her prostrate form, it was dispatched by the Indian with his weapon, but others were coming and soon they would spring upon him, though they avoided the lights.

This was her opportunity and springing to the

ground she rushed into the cabin where she gathered up some large cedar limbs that had been used for a bed until they were dry. Holding them in the fire for a moment she ran out with them all aflame and brandishing them right and left succeeded in frightening the wild hungry pack away from the yard, as nothing but fire would have done.

When she turned to look after Muncy, the Indian was there before her assisting her to her feet and inquiring if she were hurt.

As she pushed the blanket back from her face she told him she was not dangerously hurt. The leather and fur she wore had protected her neck and shoulders and she had held the thick blanket over her head and face.

"Why this is Muncy," said he. "Do you know me?"

"Yes, when I saw you at the door; then I had to pull the blanket over my face. How many wolves did you kill, Lighfoot?"

"I can't tell how many. If it hadn't been for the fire brand the battle would have gone against us. I doubt if we would ever have reached the door. It might have been. Just see the poor horses, how tired and wet they are. Yes, you go into the fire and I will get the horses untangled and take off the saddles."

"No," said Blue Belle, "I will help. We had so many things on the pack horses outside the saddle bags and they are all over the yard."

Now, when Muncy was safe by the fire she gathered up some more of the cedar boughs and, lighting them, started a fire farther out in the yard. Then they hastened to get everything inside the cabin. When this was

done and the horses cared for in the long log stable, they began planning for supper.

"Well, Muncy, the wolves got our turkey, we'll have to get out something else, as we had plenty before the boys gave us the things they provided."

"Then they told him of their experience with the boys on the way. He insisted on having a warm meal after such an evening as they had. That they were visiting him and should rest, and let him prepare it, which he did and they enjoyed his hot soup and baked fish almost as much as they had their dinner.

After supper, Muncy, who was feeling much better, arranged the robes for reclining around the fire, while the others cleared away the remainder of their rich repast. Soon they all sat down around the fire, the tall straight form of the red man on one side and the two sisters on the other.

Throwing back the locks of black hair with his shapely hands, he gazed long and earnestly at Muncy. Finally he said, "I notice by your packs and bundles that you are starting on a long journey. You are not going to leave the West for good, I hope?"

"Yes, I had thought of doing so, but am not as sure of staying in Ohio as I felt to be some weeks ago. I may find my work this side of the Mississippi."

"Well," said he, "I had not seen you for so long, but I could never forget the good times we had at corn husking and all the things we took part in with the other youngsters. What times we did have." And the tell-tale smiles that played over his plain features gave proof of pleasant memories awakened of the time spent on the



“His bright eyes fixed on Muncy’s face.

Ohio hills, yes, and after they came to the new hunting grounds, too.

His bright eyes fixed on Muncy's face while resting his elbow on the robes to his right, gave him the easy reclining position habitual to the well-formed Indian.

She had known him when his father brought him to their tribe a lonely little boy. Then she became better acquainted with him, a slender youth, jovial and foremost in their games. Then the band whom his father had joined, when he came from the east with the child, after his mother and all their tribe were slain, he only escaping and fleeing with the boy in his arms, joined the Miamis who were living peacefully with the French settlers in the eastern part of the Ohio Valley. These kind Indians tried to comfort him and assisted him in caring for the little papoose. A spirit of revenge burned in his bosom and he determined to kill all the white men's squaws and break up their homes. As an Indian brave, he must be true to his training and revenge the wrongs of his people.

It was he who brought little Blue Belle to them, and afterwards she remembered him when they were driven from Ohio and all came West. He had become very useful in the tribe. In fact, he was a friend to everybody who knew him, until one time he and his son were missing and could never be found. That was many years ago and they all concluded they had met with an accident, as they never returned. These thoughts of the past were going through her mind when he suddenly inquired: "Have you ever heard from Blue Belle since she fled with the young paleface your father had captured several years before the war?"

Muncy felt a grip on her side under the blanket and took it as a warning for her not to tell him who she was.

"Oh, yes, I heard they went to a French fort and when they were about to be driven out by the English, being married while at the fort and not wanting to go to France, they escaped again into the forest, but of course, they found the wigwams all destroyed and the fires all out. Then they lived in a cave on the hillside and finally built a home down in the valley, but have always lived in the forest. That is all I have to tell about her. Now I want to know about yourself and your father. Is he living?"

"Well, I hope he is," said her friend.

"Don't you know?" asked Muncy. "What made you leave our country, and have you been living here in this great forest ever since?"

"Yes, we lived here all these years, but I may not be able to answer all your questions. My father was getting old, his body worn out. He left it a few weeks ago. It has been very lonely here since. I thought I would go back as soon as my corn and potatoes were gathered. You may not believe me, but I longed to see you more than any one else. I am glad I was still here or the wolves might have devoured you."

"Well, they surely would. Your light guided me here. It was a spark at first, but it gave me courage to press on till it became brighter."

Blue Belle, whose head was resting on Muncy's lap with closed eyes, appeared to be sleeping, while listening to the conversation of the dusky lovers in their own tongue.

"But you have not told me why your father took

you away. Mother thought they were doing all they could for your comfort, as he had no woman and no mother."

"Yes, that is true, and my father appreciated your kindness. He was attached to you all. It was on my account he left. They were talking of training me for a brave or chief and he felt that he could not have me put through the hardening process it requires for a brave among our people. I can not explain this matter fully without giving you my father's experience. I mean the part that made him different from other Indians, all the latter part of his life. Something he felt so deeply that he never spoke of it even to me, until he told me with so much feeling a short time before he went away.

"It is connected with blue Belle. I have among the things most carefully treasured by him, a little necklace he said belonged to her. It must have cost much money; made of pearls and a crest of diamonds."

Blue Belle moved her head slightly to hide her face in Muncy's lap that the boy's disguise would keep her from being known.

Muncy saying nothing, he continued. "As the design appears to be French, we thought she might learn something of her own people, if any of them are yet alive. If you and your friend are going to the old hunting ground in Ohio, I might send it by you. Who is this woman anyway? While she had her cap on I thought she was a squaw, but with it off the firelight shows some of the waves, and these are always absent in the Indian's hair. Was she any one I ever knew? She must be sound asleep," he said, lowering his voice.

Here she moved again, drawing the blanket over her back hair, but said nothing.

He was waiting for a reply from Muncy.

"Yes, I must admit she is painted. She is a white woman but I think a heap of her. She helped me care for my mother and was with me when she left us, but she wants to look like an Indian now. While she sleeps you go on with the account of your father's last hours. I am wanting to know the part which is no doubt sacred to you, if you are willing to tell me. I liked to hear him talk and he had good influence in our tribe. We missed you both after you went away. Most especially his counsel which had great weight in deciding important matters."

Saying it would be a relief to tell her, he went to the farther side of the hut and removing several robes, he brought out a roll of finest deer skins to the light of the fire, and unrolling these produced a good-sized box filled with trinkets and such things as Indians have among their most valued keepsakes. Kneeling beside it, he took out a small box wrapped in a fawn skin, and taking off the lid, held up a little necklace. As the light of the fire played upon it, Muncy gave a cry of delight as she closed her hand on Blue Belle's.

She raised her head and gazed on the glittering jewels for a moment, then whispered, "My own people were French." Closing her eyes she again sank down as if overcome with sleep. The man was putting the necklace away, wrapping it just as it had lain so long. She was careful not to lose a word as he proceeded to relate what his father had told him about the little girl to whom it belonged, and how one day he wandered

through the forest, lonely and enraged, thinking how the paleface men had destroyed their homes and all that was dear to them and continued taking their land and driving them away into a strange country toward the setting sun. Then he thought why should the braves be so weak as to let them drive us away, and make nice homes for themselves, spoiling all our hunting grounds? Suddenly he came to a place where the trees were all cleared out and a nice little house with bright flowers around the door steps, and farther away corn and potatoes growing as he had never seen them grow before. Going into the house he found a white woman. When she saw him she was so terrified that she fell on the bed near her, taking her little son in her arms. Patting her bosom she told the Indian by signs that her child would starve if she was killed. But his soul was lost in bitterness and revenge. As he gathered her soft hair in his hand, she fainted. When he had scalped her he thought he must kill the child as he did not want him. When he raised his arm to strike the fatal blow the babe looked up and smiled, holding out his hands as if he loved him. He hesitated for a moment, his heart touched, but he would not let tenderness rule his determination, and the cruel deed was done in the very light of heaven shining through the face of that innocent child. He left the little one beside his mother, dead, and went away with the little girl to the Indian village, wending his way through the thick wood. When he came to a log he sat down to rest. She sat on his knee eating the parched corn he gave her and smiled in his face with the same confidence her little brother had shown, which was more than he could bear and he gave her to some of his

friends. He said that the smile that apparently was lost with one blow, always stayed with him and changed his life. He no longer cared to be an Indian brave and found it not hard to love his enemies. He never took the life of a human being or gave his consent for others to do so after that experience.

While he kept the scalps he had taken, it was not to show his victory, for he ceased to wear them as trophies, or hang them in his wigwam to be seen. For many years they have been kept, carefully put away out of sight. You may not care to see any of them unless it were Blue Belle's mother, the most beautiful hair among them all.

Muncy felt her white sister's form tremble and she whispered, "What shall I do?"

"Tell him," she replied, "that I am awake. That I am Blue Belle." She raised up on her elbow and gazed into the fire. The Indian raised to his feet and stood as if paralyzed, as he was unable to realize what he had done.

Aroused at length from her reverie, she exclaimed: "Mother, my own mother? Can you tell me her name and mine? All I can remember is being carried through the woods and coming to a big fire with many red people gathered around it and they were all looking at me."

"I wish I could tell you, but my opinion is my father never knew. He was a stranger in that part of the country, where the French and Indians were on good terms and lived with unprotected homes, at times going to the forts for such things as were needed. I was too young to remember anything but seeing you sitting on my father's knee. They said you told them, when

questioned, that your name was Belle, your eyes being so blue many of them said call her 'Blue Belle,' and we have known you by that name ever since. Your necklace has the letters I. D. V. carved on the inside," said he, handing it to her.

"Yes, I think it is French. Expect the 'I' was for Isabel, and they called me Belle for short. My father may be living and other relatives too. If we had the full name it would give us a better chance, but we will make all the effort in our power. I know my good man will help me. And my poor mother. Let me have that sca—that—oh, dear, you know, her hair, with the part of her poor dear head attached to it. How dreadful!"

He gave her the larger box with hesitancy, wishing it had never been kept.

"I have often seen strings of these," she said, "but never realized how terrible it was until now," and she looked them over one by one. "Why the English gave the Indians so much apiece for all they could get from the settlers families, whom they called rebels, as they had struck for liberty. So when the men were away fighting for the right of a free country their families were not safe, unless in forts or towns. And this, my mother's, how can I bear to think of it? Yet, I must." As she held it up and the light shown on it, she exclaimed: "Why, it is just the color of my daughter's hair. My own sweet Isabel, and she don't resemble her father or me. Maybe she is like my mother in disposition and looks." Again she was silent, trying to penetrate the past, her origin and her people.

Muncy felt more than ever that she was being sep-

arated from the only sister she had ever known. At length she ventured to ask if she would take it with her.

"Will I take it with me? Why, of course I will. It is all I have left of my mother. No one to tell me anything about her. Oh! If I had only been older so I could remember something of her!"

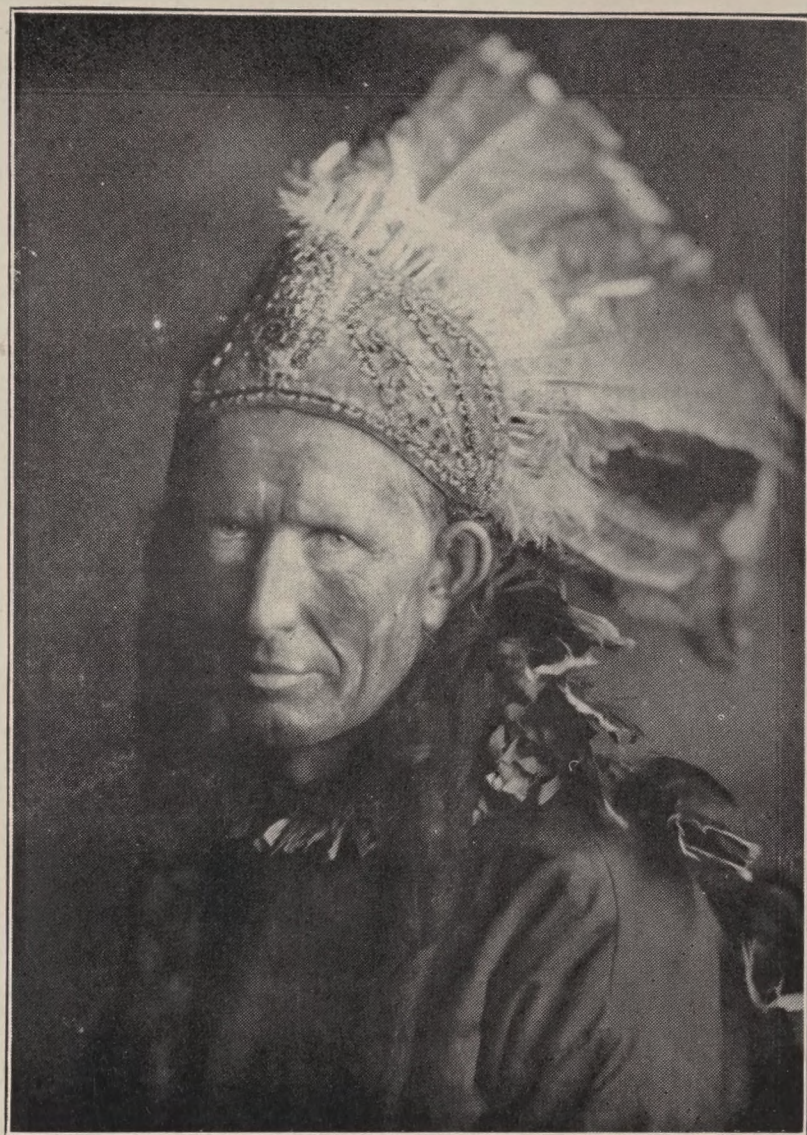
"Well, it must be getting late, and we must get all the rest we can, so we will feel like traveling to-morrow. We can sleep here by the fire, can't we, Mr. Lightfoot?"

"Yes," said he, "but I will fix you a bed. I have plenty of robes."

With the little box containing her necklace, he gave her another for her mother's hair, as she called the scalp. Tying them together with fine leather strings, then wrapping the soft little fawn skin around them both, she put them away in a safe place in her saddlebags. "Now," said she, "they will be all right till we get home."

"Yes," said Lightfoot, "and I may as well burn the others. It is not likely any of the others will ever be wanted."

"Will you please let me see them again?" While looking over them she had been attracted by a very small one with light silken ringlets. "This was next to mother's on the end of the string, and it might, yes, it must be my little brother's." Twisting the little curls caressingly around her fingers, she wrapped them carefully with her mother's and put them all away, while he was arranging their bed and mounting the ladder to his own resting place. Our travelers were soon asleep for the night.



Lightfoot.

CHAPTER X.

INDIAN LOVERS.

WHEN they awoke next morning and Blue Belle was aroused enough to know it was daylight and where they were, she lay thinking over all that occurred the evening before. The more she thought the greater was her longing to know more about her own people. When Muncy began to stir they were soon up and clad in their Indian garb.

When Lightfoot came down and started the fire, and brought water and put over it to boil, their simple breakfast was soon prepared and partaken by them almost in silence; Blue Belle simply remarking how much they had to be thankful for, felt that her thoughts were too deep for utterance.

Lightfoot soon proposed a tramp around the premises, and to see his father's grave.

To this Muncy gladly agreed.

Blue Belle said she would be preparing everything ready to load the horses while they cared for them and had their walk, as she wanted to be on their journey again as soon as possible.

Throwing their blankets around them, Muncy and her friend went out into the crisp morning air, leaving the white woman to her thoughts and employment. The fracas they had with the wolves made repacking necessary.

She was more anxious than before to get home and unburden her mind to Jehu. She was so glad her affections and choice in life had been guided and taken away to her own again. If he had not been captured and come to her, she would have grown up without even hearing the English language, and finally married an Indian Chief. "Maybe I would have thought the Indians were all right. No, I think I could never have loved a cruel Indian as I love my good man. Well, I have been among them nearly half my life and they were kind to me, unless it was when I loved Jehu Bailey. There is one thing I do know, people should not condemn them all because some of them are trained up to be cruel. Many of them are good like Muncy. It's the same way with white people, only most of them have better opportunities to be Christians."

While her thoughts were running on and on over the conditions of her past life, Lightfoot and Muncy were going around the clearing among the corn and beans and other vegetables he had planted and cultivated and finally to his father's resting place, under the great trees.

"I thought about fixing a place overhead, but concluded it would be better and less likely to be disturbed under the ground, with these rocks over it. This forest is full of wild animals and I can not stay here to protect it. This tube I put down to the box to admit air and you see the berries I filled it with have not been taken out from below. If he did not come to in two weeks and take some of them out, he never would. They never sank the least bit, for I have watched them closely. Say, Muncy, I don't feel like going back to the Indian Territory now that I know you are not there. I think I will

stay here in the woods alone until you come back."

"Oh, no, you should not do so, Lighty. You will find plenty of friends. Just tell the boys I sent you to them."

"Well, there is another thing on my mind that is more to me than anything else. I see you have never married. If I thought, or if I knew you were caring for me all these years, how happy I would be. Dare I to believe this to be true?" Receiving no reply he continued: "I know you had offers before we came away and the standing of your family with your own influence, among all you were acquainted with makes me sure you would have more."

Still she was silent, and he came closer. "Muncy, I have been thinking about you and caring for you since we were young folks together."

Her face was hid in the blanket now and he received not a word of encouragement, but he went on. "You are the only woman I ever did care for. Now we are middle-aged man and woman and we have met again, and your voice, your manner, fascinate me even more than they did twenty years ago. All I want to know is whether you care for me."

Woman-like, she would not let him know that she cared, until she knew of a certainty how much she was to him, tho' his presence and his voice filled the void she had felt in her heart for so many years, so that when she uncovered her face, such a halo of light and joy shown there. It was more than words to him. Putting his strong arms around her, he pressed her to his breast in an ecstasy of joy. Then they sat down on a moss-covered rock. She told him she had not known how much she

had cared for him, until he and his father disappeared so mysteriously. They all cared for a long time, but when they had ceased to mention their names, except when something occurred to bring them to mind again, she continued to think of him but kept it to herself, not being sure that he had ever cared for her.

"Yes," she continued, "I never told any one except my mother, and she found it out some way before I told her. No, I couldn't tell even Blue Belle. But I can now, and that reminds me, we must go to her. I wonder how long we have been out here and she so anxious to be on her way home."

A sigh escaped his lips as they arose to return to the cabin, and the thought how soon they would be separated again. They found Blue Belle ready to start. She had brought out the horses and loaded them herself, after tying them to some small trees near the door.

"You don't need apologize," she said, laughing. "I know love never measures time."

"Well, Muncy, she seems to understand all about it without our having to tell her."

"Yes, I understand some things, but maybe not all. So you really have something to tell."

"Muncy, putting her arm around Blue Belle's neck, told her, while Lightfoot went for his horse, intending to go with them until they crossed the big water.

She told her she had somebody to live for who would be her very own. That they had talked it over and decided to make a home for themselves on the Indian Reservation.

"Well, if you have gone that far," said Blue Belle,

"he had best go with us back to the Ohio country and be married at my home."

"If you think best, we might accept your offer for next spring. Then he can gather his crop and go back to the Indian village, his old home, and take up land for our new home, and stay with our friends there while building and planting trees for our prairie home. You know how many little buttonwood trees are growing near the river. We want a grove of them for shade and timber. Lighty will enjoy having our own woods besides the fruit trees he wants to get started this fall. I see he is coming now with his horse. Yes, I want to go and spend the winter in your home as we planned before I knew about this. I can learn much about keeping house and be getting my things ready too. I want to have a model home and be a good example to all the tribe. Yes, I want to have everything ready for we will want to attend the Mission school."

"Well, that just suits me if you are willing to wait. It will be fine to have you with us through the winter. You will have a chance to spin and weave, and get more new things in the way of goods for clothing that are being brought from the East now."

"My, but we will have good times next winter!"

They were out on the woods trail now. They had been traveling the night before through the black swampy ground in the great forest of closely standing giant trees. Blue Belle's heart leaped for joy that they were safely on the way again.

Muncy inquired, as Lightfoot lead the way, if he thought they would get through the woods before night-fall, and he replied, laughing, "Yes, of course we will,

unless we stop for a turkey dinner." They proposed to have parched corn for a noon repast and eat it on the way if there was the least bit of danger of night overtaking them.

"This is a fearful place," said Blue Belle. "Just think of us planning beforehand to stop and build a fire to keep the wild beasts away, if we failed to reach any suitable stopping place, and the darkness came down so suddenly we had no time for anything but to take that terrible ride. Muncy, you must have known something about that little home in the great woods, the way you rode to get there. What do you think about it, Light-foot?"

"That is more than I can tell. One thing I do know; it was many long years before she came at all. While she was caring for her mother, and I could not leave my father, our chance for meeting again was rather hopeless. Thanks to a kind Providence, our patient waiting is now reaping a rich reward."

Now Blue Belle proposed to lead and urged her pony to a faster trot until she was some distance ahead, that she might avoid being a third party in the company. After riding alone for some distance, thinking of the future, it occurred to her that the pack horses they were taking were to carry Muncy's things she wished to keep. Now since she had decided to come West with Lightfoot in the spring and build a home in that part of the country, might it not be just as well to leave them with him to be taken care of until she returned? Strange they had not thought of this before. Checking the gait of her pony, which she noticed was more rapid when apart from the pack horse, she rode slowly along until the oth-

ers overtook her. She told them what she had been thinking, and after talking the matter over, they decided it would be best, for they would be likely to make the journey by water in the spring.

"It will be like living in a new world to have you with me, but to have our wedding trip on a boat run by steam seems impossible."

"Yes, now that Fulton has succeeded in the experiment, everybody is astonished, as they said it would never amount to anything," said Blue Belle.

"It's a pity we brought the horses and all these things this far," said Muncy. "It will be such a bother to you leading both the pack horses on this trail."

"No," said Lightfoot, "with a long rope and by tying them together, I'll get along all right. As soon as we get through the woods we will come to a settlement and I can leave the horses there and go on until I see you across the river, and on my return, stay there all night again, starting early in the morning, get home before night."

"But they will be to care for all winter."

"Well, I shall not mind that. It will keep me from getting so lonesome, to have something of your's to care for. I can use them for hauling logs and timber for building. I am so glad Blue Belle mentioned it. It is the very thing to do, for you can travel so much faster and with more satisfaction. You would have no use for them out there, anyway, as I suppose they have oxen to do their heavy work."

They had now come to a good stopping place where the horses could be fed and watered and they would have time to eat while they rested. Blue Belle helped bring

the things out and get the others seated. She said she would take a cake and a piece of meat and go over where the packs were and be getting the things out they would want to take with them, while she was eating. She said she was not hungry, that was all she would want. She would rather be alone with her own thoughts, and she knew the lovers ought to be to themselves the short time they had to be together. How good it was to be relieved from taking the loaded horses. The roads would be better, so they could enjoy the rest of the trip, if she could only hear how they were at home, but she had reason to believe they were well and waiting to receive her with open arms.

When Muncy came to assist in separating the things she would wish to take with them from the ones she could leave behind, the work went much faster, as it was really she who had to decide, though Blue Belle had them all laid out ready. "You know it won't take much room for my things," she said, "so I can take part of your's. I am sure we can get everything you want on the ponies."

"Well, you see, I want to take something to Frank and Isabel, something they can't find in Ohio. You will have to help me select the things they will like."

By the time Lightfoot came around with the horses, everything was packed, ready to be loaded, and they were soon on the way again, Blue Belle going ahead until she saw some hunters coming that way. As she thought they looked like savages when they gazed at her, she fell back, and when they had passed them, she rode on again, thinking about the boys and her disguise, of course. When these Indian hunters saw Muncy and

Lightfoot, they may have thought she was an Indian Queen. There were quite a number of them and she was glad she was painted anyway.

The afternoon passed and nothing more occurred, with the exception of the game they saw by the way, all intent on escaping in the forest.

No wolves or other dangerous animals were seen, though the shades of evening were gathering around them when they left the great woods behind them, and in a short time, reached the settlement. Lightfoot's friends welcomed him warmly and gladly received Muncy and Blue Belle as friends of his.

When supper was over, seeing they were weary from the day's journey, Lightfoot requested a room for them, and when they were alone, though they had much they would like to have talked over after their late experience, it had to be left for another time, for they were soon sleeping soundly.

CHAPTER XI.

BLUE BELLE CONTINUES HER JOURNEY.

AFTER they had crossed the river, Lightfoot left them to return to his lonely home to live now in happy preparation for carrying out their plans for the future.

Muncy was silent, wrapped in thought, while they traveled over a good country road, side by side, many miles without speaking a word. As they had left their lodging place early, they were making good time, and neither one was in a talkative mood. Both were happy, yet separated from the ones they loved and a long journey before them. They were coming to a part of the country where the woods was broken by numerous settlements. They knew kind, hospitable people lived in the small log houses where the pioneers were clearing land, planting orchards and making fences around the grain fields, already green and promising, though covered with charred stumps, where dextrous hands would have to swing the cradles in cutting the golden grain of next year's harvest.

As it was coming near the noon hour, Blue Belle suggested stopping at one of the farm houses for dinner. "I mean to feed our ponies of the corn we still have with us and eat our own victuals under the shade of a tree, just to be near somebody's home."

"All right," said Muncy, and when they drew rein at the next house, near the road, the man and woman

both came out and invited them in, while the smell of a good dinner boiling at the fireplace came through the open door. Of course, they felt like enjoying a warm meal after their long ride in the pure breeze which was just brisk enough to be pleasant. They noticed several children. A little baby was crying for its mother, who had been too busy to care for it. They motioned to her to go to the little one in the house, saying they would care for themselves, that they had their dinner with them and feed for their ponies. If they allowed them to enjoy the shade and use their troughs for watering and feeding, they could get along all right.

Having assured them that they were welcome, he went to his dinner.

They had laid the saddle-bags and extra sacks under a great tree, and, after caring for the ponies, took out their cakes and cold meat, and sat down on them to eat. They saw an elderly woman, with a limp in her brisk step, coming down the walk with a large yellow bowl of steaming hot cabbage and rich soup, two saucers and spoons on top.

Blue Bell sprang to meet her, exclaiming: "Oh, grandmother, this is for us! I expect you have been a traveler some time and knew just how we would appreciate this hot soup."

"Yes, my dear, I do, and I knew it would do you good. Can I get something hot for you to drink?"

"No, indeed, mother, this is both food and drink and with our dry bread, will make a complete meal."

"Well, if you want any more, come to the door and I will get it for you. My daughter said they invited you

in, but she thought you were afraid it would add to her care."

"Well, for that part, we will enjoy it out here better, and this large dish will be all we shall need."

The woman went to her dinner happy in knowing she had done her part. The travelers ate the soup with a relish known only when the appetite is right.

"The finest dinner in the best eating-house could be no better than this soup, as it is seasoned just right. Did you ever think what a great thing salt is? How tasteless the very best vegetables are without it. On the other hand too much spoils it all."

"Yes, I think we can get a valuable lesson from this," said Muncy. "When Jesus told His Disciples 'they were the salt of the earth' He meant a great deal. And when He said, 'If the salt has lost its savor, wherewith or how shall it be salted?' So if those who claim to be His disciples and followers to minister, giving His Gospel to the world, fail to impart the savor of the Gospel, or fail to use it judiciously, according to the need, a sense of which can only be found by seeking and waiting for His Spirit to guide us from within."

"Yes," said Blue Belle, "if we only had more real, true dispensers of spiritual food in the world, the souls of the people would grow and be prepared for God's Kingdom on earth for which Jesus taught His Disciples to pray. We have the promise 'that with this Kingdom all things needful will be added.' I have just been thinking how true this is in your case. For with the missionary spirit born and nurtured through the long years in which the craving of your heart was never satisfied, while you nursed an almost hopeless love, you knew hu-

man nature was weak, so you sought and found the Comforter whose strength was so much greater than your own, that through it you have been able to comfort and cheer every one with whom you mingled. So the weak looked to you for strength. Yet it is given without respect of person to the man or woman who seeks until they find atonement with God, through His Spirit the Christ. Now added to this which you found and have kept and lived for others the needful things in this life for your own happiness are being given. I know from my own experience what the joy of a faithful, loving companion must be to the Christian soldier treading the way alone, with no one in whom they can confide for human sympathy and physical strength, while you are suspended, as it were, twixt earth and heaven, with one hand clasped in God's infinite power and the other extended to weak erring humanity. I surely know of no one more deserving of this blessing."

"Oh, then you think it is all right," said Muncy. "You know what Paul said, 'That when he was at home in the flesh he was absent from the Lord,' and we know he was a great worker."

"Yes, and we know from his writings what a time he had fighting the evil in himself, until the better part became so strong he couldn't be separated from it, so he could say, 'to live is Christ.' And to be governed by His Spirit gave him liberty to enjoy all things that were good. Yes, Muncy, I believe God smiles on your happiness and your prospect of visiting with the friends of your childhood, then returning to your own people, with an opportunity of serving them in a way that is both pleasing and

profitable and bring joy to the hearts of the many that love you."

Muncy leaned over, and putting her arm around Blue Belle thanked her for the comforting message she had given her. Then they arose to go. The farmer came forward and said he would bring out the ponies, but he wanted to tell them first what was on his mind. "When I was taking my noon rest between the lilac bush and the house, I heard you talking, and realized that you were talking language I could understand. This aroused my curiosity and I became interested in what you were saying, as I had thought you were both Indians. What I want to say this: We have been living here for several years. Some of our neighbors and others living in the little village, some ten miles away, are interested in having a little church and a preacher. My wife and her mother have been wanting me to join with others in building one. I have not been able to see any good it will do us or others from all I could remember hearing in the old church we attended in Boston, back East, but since hearing you talk on religious subjects, I see everything depends on knowing more about God and the Bible. No matter how we prosper, none of it can do us any good if we are not happy and don't understand how to live. It is none of my business whether you are Indians or white women. I just wanted you to know that I believe it worth while to work and seek to possess, what you were talking to each other about. It is something real. I must not detain you longer," he said, starting to the stable.

While he brought out the ponies and put the saddles and saddle-bags on, they had some conversation with the

mother and grandmother. Enough to know that they believed in Christianity, but he could not understand it in the garb they had been taught to clothe it in. When he heard in the simple language they used, or rather overheard, it was so plain he caught a glimpse of the truth, which every one must find for themselves, if they would have a light to shine for others.

When they were on the way again, the cloud had been lifted and they conversed freely of the past, but mostly planning for the future; how the time would be spent after they were at home.

They were coming to a part of the country more thickly settled now, finding kind, hospitable people all the way with whom they could lodge and feel safe in their clean, simple homes.

"Say, Muncy, did you notice how people gazed at us when we were coming through that large town? Fort Dearborn, I think the missionaries said the name was. Maybe they remembered seeing my pony, and might possibly have remembered how I appeared on the way when I was coming West and were surprised at my appearance now."

"Well, if that is the case, it is time you were getting the paint and feathers off. I am sure you will have no need for them on this end of our journey."

"That is right and I will be glad to be getting rid of this paint. It is so uncomfortable, especially my hair and cheeks where they put it on so thick. I think if I had to use things like this I would soon cease to be different in appearance from the Indian women."

"Yes," said Muncy, "and I expect you do not know your fine complexion and lustrous hair were preserved

by your almost mother's care. She never allowed anything used that would in any way change the natural appearance of either."

"No, I never knew that," said Blue Belle. "Sure it is I will never know how much I owe our red mother for her wise care over me during my childhood and early youth. The only real sacrifice I ever made for her was leaving my family to come to her in the time of great need, when our friends and especially our children must be so much to us. Then as you know, it gave her an opportunity to relieve her mind concerning certain matters about the time when my interest centered on Jehu, which must have been a great disappointment to my red parents.

"As it is coming time for our noon-day meal, I want to stop by a clear running brook. I will take a good wash. The sun is shining so warm to-day, it will be the very time and there is nothing I could enjoy better just now."

"The ponies cantered along over the soft road in response to their riders wish and soon they came to a bridge and the sight of sparkling water. Muncy suggested they had better water and feed the ponies, and have their lunch in the usual way, as the washing process might be a tedious one and they had better make sure of their dinners.

When that was over they found a moss-covered log close to the running brook under the shade of a great tree. The leafy branches reached out over the stream and a hollow at the roots made a large basin of water at the edge of the bank, the home of many little fishes darting around in the sunshine. Soon many of them would

find a hiding place farther back under the roots of the tree.

"This is a fine place," said Blue Belle. "The sun has made the water warm, too." Muncy brought out the linen bag containing their brushes and combs, a piece of soap and some wash rags and a small towel. They were ready for business.

"I wonder how I have endured having my head and neck in such a plight all the days and nights we have been on the way? Now I can scarcely wait a minute. I am so anxious to be getting it off since there is no necessity for keeping it on."

"Well, you'll not have to wait longer. We'll do what we can in the warm part of the day. Your hair will dry with the air and sunshine while we journey, if we can get that black stuff out of it. I want to see it hanging loose in wavy clusters around your neck and face, as it used to do years ago when we were out riding."

Blue Belle was being transformed as far as lather could change her appearance while Muncy was talking. Now she was ready for her part of the work. Putting on a large cotton apron, she began the task as soon as she could for laughing at the forlorn object presented.

"Here is a cloth. Do make haste," said Blue Belle. "If some one should happen to come along the road, what would they think, not knowing my reason for being in such a fix?"

"Surely I will," said Muncy, "for you look worse now than you have at all. If you could see yourself you would excuse me for laughing. Actually if anybody does come along they might report having seen a spook on this woods road and make some people afraid of this

beautiful place below the bridge. There is always some reason for the ghost stories some imaginative people keep circulating in new settlements. Well, I can't see what we can do, the soap brings some of it loose, but the more I rub your head, the blacker it gets, and the red and black stripes on your face seem to be there to stay. The soap and water and rubbing makes them show plainer. I don't wonder now that mother wouldn't allow anything put on your velvety face and neck."

"For pity's sake, let's get down to the water and get rid of what you have soaked and rubbed loose."

By this time Blue Belle's eyes were losing the ability to serve her. Muncy led her to the sunny part of the stream where she could lean over and bathe her face and have her hair and head washed. Muncy rubbed her neck, ears and head with all the energy habitual to her when something required cleansing, adding soap from time to time, never ceasing, until at last Blue Belle protested she had bourned all she could. "If it won't come off with all that rubbing, let it stay on till it wears away. I suppose it will sometime. I just feel like crying, but that would do no good. I know they will be glad to have me at home no matter how I look." After rinsing her face and hair again, and going on the plan suggested by Muncy that there was as much in good wiping as washing—but none of it proving satisfactory—they gave it up and sat down on the log to rest a few minutes before getting the ponies.

"Are you sorry you allowed the boys to put that terrible stuff on your hair and paint your face, Blue Belle?"

"Oh, no. I am here safe now and if I had not been disguised there is no telling where I might be now. Don't

you remember seeing the big hunters when we were coming through the great woods? They came close enough for me to see they were savages and could soon have overpowered us and carried me off if they had wanted to. You never knew how scared I was and how glad I was for the paint and feathers when that big Indian was gazing at me from among the trees. You know I fell back and waited until you and Lightfoot came up. They were farther away by that time and I said nothing. Expect I will have to wait till I get home, yet I would like to be looking natural when my folks see me. However, the great thing is to get there. I am sure of a warm welcome, if I am disfigured."

"I thought it would come off," said Muncy, looking very sad. "I am sorry I laughed at you now."

"Never mind, I am glad we will be safe for the rest of the way." She gathered up the towels Muncy had hung on the bushes in the sun, saying they were nearly dry. A wild blackberry brier caught them and detained her a moment, as if to hinder her making too much haste. But they were soon on their way, making good time as before.

"The next night was spent with a young couple in a one-room house, who shared their bed with them. It was getting late and as the husband was not ready to come at the wife's suggestion they retired to the back part of the bed, while she and her babe occupied the front. They had a good night's rest and when they awoke the next morning the baby was sleeping quietly on the place she had left, while the girl wife was busy getting breakfast. No man was to be seen, but his bed at the side of the chimney, out of the way, was just as he

had left it, showing he had given up his bed to accommodate them and had slept on the floor.

They were very glad to have them stop in their little home since they had left all their relatives and friends in the far East. Bringing all their belongings with them, they had settled in this lonely spot to build up a home for themselves. He had already cleared enough ground to raise vegetables and grain for their own use. They said when they started on the journey, they had expected to go farther West. But having to go slow, as much of the way was on new road after they left Richmond, a few hundred miles back. The trees had been cut very low in the ground and they made the road bumpy, causing the wagon to jolt so, that the little woman was nearly worn out before they reached Knox, a small settlement in the woods. Coming a few miles farther they decided to make that the end of their journey as the land was level and rich, and not far from some of the lakes they were told and only one or two days' journey to Fort Dearborn, or Chicago, as they call it now.

"We bought a large tract of land here," said he, "believing it to be a good investment, as it will be thickly settled before many years."

"Yes, it is quite likely it will," said Blue Belle. "We were so glad to find you here last night and will never forget your kindness in sharing the comforts of your home with us last night, as we had traveled later than usual on this long woods road, finding no place to stop until we came to your home, with its cheerful light among the night sounds in the dense woods. We heard no wolves or panthers, but the moon was not up, and we began to feel anxious until we saw your welcome light."

"You were in no danger," said their host, "as they have all been driven out or killed. The men gather up from the settlements when a day has been set for a drive and when they have decided on a center, they form a great circle, gradually coming together. As they near the center, they allow no ferocious animal to escape, and if they do, it is repeated until no more are seen by hunters or others in the neighborhood. They are getting scarce in this flat country, being no rocks or caves where they can hide, they have to leave. The white settlers know how to get rid of these things, if they can get dogs and enough ammunition."

"Well," said Blue Belle, "clearing the country of these things opens the way for clearing the land and raising all manner of good things in the soil. So you see, Muncy, how the Indians' prejudice in preserving the hunting grounds was hindering them from advancing. What would have done them more good, though they grew up with a love for the wilderness? If you keep your health and strength I would like to see your home twenty-five years from now, judging from the start you have already made."

With words of encouragement to the mother holding the little one in her arms, they were off on the road again early in the morning, after a warm breakfast.

CHAPTER XII.

MEETING KIND FRIENDS.

THE evening of the next day they were nearing a village and being weary, decided to stop at a tavern, have their ponies cared for, get a good night's rest and be on their way early and spend no time talking. The country was getting more open now. Meeting an elderly man he advised them, seeing that they were travelers, that if they were going very far they had better get to the National Road, which they did by following his directions and were very much encouraged as they would have such a good road to the East that they could travel all the way until nearly home. They went on in the best of spirits. One day more and they would be to Union City, and cross the line into the State of Ohio. Blue Belle declared they must lose no more time on her appearance if she did look worse than a respectable Indian, as she had seen herself in the big looking glass at the tavern the morning before, she could not forget just how she looked now.

When the noon hour came they halted in an open place by the side of the road, where abundance of nice grass was growing. Giving the ponies their feed of shelled corn, they sat down to partake of another dry meal and no prospect of getting any hot soup, "Not even the smell of it," Muncy remarked, laughing.

"Well, if we had some cool water to drink, I would be satisfied," said Blue Belle. Putting the things away they thought of the ponies.

Muncy said, "Yes, it is worse for them to have no drink than it is for us, for they only drank a little this morning and have been going on the canter ever since."

Taking them farther down where the grass was thicker, Blue Belle noticed the ground was softer. From appearances there was water not far away. Leaving the ponies to enjoy the fresh grass they pushed the bushes aside. "If it was the right time of year we would have plenty of fruit, for these are huckleberry bushes, the tall kind that grow in bogs." Going a few steps farther they found running water and decided its course had been turned when the road was made. Finding some large leaves on a tree nearby, they soon made some cups and enjoyed a good drink at the little brook in the woods. When they were watering the ponies before leaving, Blue Belle said, "I would like to visit this place sometime again, especially when the berries are ripe and we have more time to linger."

When the last rays of the setting sun were resting on the autumn leaves they left the thick woodland behind and came where good-sized farms and comfortable homes were in sight. Having traveled farther than usual that day, they were tired, and were glad to accept the kind invitation to alight when they halted in front of one of these homes. Muncy was greatly pleased to hear them use the same language the Friend missionaries did and was quite at home with them, feeling that it was a great privilege to visit some of these Friends in their own home and hear them talk in the large family of sisters

and brothers where love and kindness prevailed. No burden appeared to rest on parents or children. With the existing harmony, nothing was said or done to mar the freedom and enjoyment of any one in the home. They not only cared for the strangers as their invited guests, but were glad to have them relate their experience.

Realizing they were among friends, they told them how Blue Belle had been painted by the boys so as to pass for an Indian Queen and be safer traveling through the part of the country where she might be taken by some of the Indians. How they had failed to remove it with soap and water, having dried so long before trying to get it off. The manner in which they related this experience was amusing, especially to the young folks, but their grandmother's sympathy was manifested for the interesting young traveler when she volunteered to help her out of the trouble if she desired her to do so.

"Then you think it can be taken off, or at least a part of it by some means? Oh, I would be so glad if it could."

One of the girls said: "Oh, yes, grandmother has a remedy for our worst troubles. When mother and father fail, we always go to her. Mammy says she is rich in experience."

"Why, Mary, how thee does talk. I would rather let my work speak, as that alone is the real evidence. Come into my room, dear, and we will see what can be done," she said, addressing Blue Belle, who gladly followed her, the mother telling her girls to get whatever their grandmother called for. One of them went for hot water, soap and towels. A smaller one was sent to get the combs and brushes out of the till of her large chest, one

of her brothers going along to carry the candle and lift the heavy lid. When she thought she had all that was sent for he reminded her of the soft cotton apron under the till which she was to get.

"Oh, yes," she said. "I was forgetting that. I was thinking about which were the right combs and brushes. I am glad thee told me, now we'll not have to come back."

When they had brought them to their grandmother, they hastened back to the living-room, where other members of the family were listening to the Indian woman conversing with their father and mother, all sitting in a circle around the large open fireplace, which gave both warmth and light.

In the other room in front of a small fireplace, Blue Belle was sitting on a low chair and grandmother had begun her interesting task. "This paint on the cheek will have to be soaked with iodine. I will mix it with goose grease so it will not be too severe, then put it on first. This castile soap will surely remove every particle of black from thy face and neck, when used with hot water. This gummy stuff on thy hair will require something else. Does thee know what sort of a mixture they made use of for this?" said she, lifting the dark unnatural mass with a hand, holding the candle in the other hand while she inspected it.

"Well, it may have to be worked out by degrees. I have seen women, one at least, whose hair was in a worse condition, caused by a long spell of severe illness, when nothing could be done with her hair for six weeks. Her head had rolled upon the pillow until the long tresses worked into a solid mass. She had been taken down

so suddenly her attendants had no opportunity to prepare it by plaiting as we mostly do. The nurse thought it would have to be cut close to her head, but a sister came who had the patience to work with it by the hour, until little by little it was all straightened out and was natural again. This hair will not require anything so tedious. When we apply the right thing it will soon be all right. Now, if thee will sit on this stool close to the fire, I will put plenty of goose grease on and will try heating and rubbing it good for the benefit of the head as well as the hair. If that fails I will try castor oil."

"Well, I surely appreciate your kindness and care for me, a stranger who may never be able to return it in any way."

"Yes, we can always find some one needing assistance, and remembering what Jesus said: 'In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' If in the spirit we will continue passing it on to others the need of all will be met. Well, my dear, I find the trouble giving way under the use of this stiff brush. If thee will turn around I can get at the other side better and a change in position will be more restful."

"Oh, isn't that good, grandmother? All this side is getting soft and more natural."

"Yes, I think the stuff will all wash out now. Then the color will be all right again. We could have left this work till morning, but I know from what was said you would be anxious to be on your way early."

"Oh, yes, then think how much better I can rest knowing it is off. I had decided to go home as I was,

rather than spend any more time in what seemed a hopeless task."

"Yes, poor dear, it was, when you had no grease or hot water."

"We have met with kind people all the way, yet I have felt more at home here than in all the months I have been away from my family."

"Well, I think you will in two or three days be at home."

"That is right, grandma, but the time seems so long. If we could go as fast as they say the steamboats do, why we could be there in less than a day on the Ohio River."

While they were talking, grandma was washing her head and soaking her hair in the basin of hot suds on her lap and was pleased to see the effect it was having on her face and neck, all but the painted part, the stripes not showing as plain as they did on the dark background. However, the fire was getting quite low now, but the water in the small kettle was hot yet. Making a lather first of the castile soap she spread it thickly over all the painted parts on Blue Belle's face and neck. Dipping a soft linen cloth in a basin of hot water, she rubbed gently but firmly until the paint gave way and she could wash it off, which she did; then gave her a large basin of pure soft water on the wash-stand, where she enjoyed the best wash she had had for many days.

When she had finished, she came and put her arms around the older woman and laid her soft warm cheek against her cool, wrinkled one, while she shed tears of joy and gratitude, more eloquent than words. Thus they stood for a few moments, so quiet they could hear the

conversation still going on with unabated interest in the next room.

Then the grandmother said: "I would like to have heard the red sister talk, but the children will remember most what she has said and will tell me after you are gone on your way."

When they joined the circle around the large fireplace, they were all astonished, and Muncy shouted with joy, as her white sister was like herself again, since she had begun to fear she never would be.

After a comfortable night's rest and an appetizing breakfast, the travelers were refreshed and ready to resume their journey. With words of appreciation and some presents for the younger members of the family, they mounted their ponies and were riding briskly along in the fresh morning air. When the sunshine flooded hill and dale over the beautiful rolling land and well-tilled fields of ripening corn, Blue Belle exclaimed: "We have crossed the line! We are in Ohio!"

The remainder of the way was passed over as rapidly as their ponies could carry them. With hasty lunches beside the good road, where they found oats for the horses and a fresh supply of good things for their dinner, all put away in their saddle-bags by their friends without saying a word.

"Only two days more. Really not more than one," said Blue Belle, "for when we get to Columbus I will feel almost home."

So the last day was spent in the saddle, pressing forward, halting a few moments for the ponies to eat a few mouthfuls of oats at the noon hour, they pressed on saying, "if they watered them often they could keep up to

the end of the journey when they would have a good feed and be turned out for a long rest in a good pasture."

When at last they reached the woods road that led to Forest Home, great showers of leaves were falling from the red and yellow maples. Blue Belle said, "I was hoping we could get here in time to see these many-colored leaves before they had all fallen to the ground. These trees are beautiful yet, but see the road is covered with them too. The beech and most of the other trees have already shed their leaves. We just came in time. The glory of autumn will soon be over. How I do love to go through these fallen leaves."

"Yes," said Muncy. "It is many years since we rode over the beds of rustling leaves together."

"True," said Blue Belle, "and it don't seem very long to me. I can't realize, for the time passes so rapidly. Yet this part of the country shows but little change. This woods road, especially on this side. We hope it will remain a forest for many years. Most of our land is on the east end of this road, and takes in our playground over the river, with all the things we were most familiar with while growing up."

CHAPTER XIII.

ARRIVING HOME.

“WE ARE nearly home now. How is this? They must have opened up on that side farther west from the part that was cleared around our buildings. It was all forest on both sides when I went away. Yes, they have, and I believe they are working there now, cutting trees. Do you hear the sound of their axes?”

As they came nearer it ceased, and they saw two men coming toward the road to meet them. “Oh, yes, that is Jehu and my boy, Frank.” Blue Belle sprang from her pony and climbing the rail fence, ran to meet them, coming back more slowly, leaning on her husband’s arm, while Frank held her other hand, assisting her when possible to get over the fallen trees.

They found Muncy standing by the road side, gazing far out in the forest still in its primitive state, the released ponies cropping the fresh grass at her feet.

“Well,” said Jehu, coming up and grasping her hand warmly, “I see you have not lost the kind heart you possessed in your girlhood.”

“Yes, you see these faithful creatures have had no opportunity to get a mouthful of grass since yesterday.”

Frank, who had been busy talking and could scarcely move his eyes from his mother’s face, now came forward at her suggestion to welcome Aunt Muncy, tell-

ing her how tired his neck was getting as it had to turn so often to look down the road to see if they were coming in sight, "but just when we were closely engaged in cutting a large tree, we heard Mammy's pony nicker. We dropped our axes that time to look, and sure enough you were coming at last.. She knew she was getting back home. Yes, you did, poor, little, old pet. Do you know me, Starlight?" He put his arm around her neck, for she put her soft nose against his cheek caressingly. "Suppose I take the ponies up and get them relieved of the pack saddles and give them something more substantial to eat."

"Yes," said his mother. "I suppose Isabel is all right?"

"Oh, yes, and grandfather, too."

"Who?" asked his mother, with a puzzled look on her face.

"Why, son," said his father, "you are abrupt. But maybe it is as well, for I want to talk to her on the subject before they meet. Go slow, my boy, for they are watching the lane every day for their coming, you know, and will rush out to meet them, though I requested them to go slow. I think Isabel will understand the need of being careful on his account.

"Oh, do explain," said Blue Belle.

Jehu replied, "Yes, dear, you will soon know all I do about the person Frank speaks of as grandfather, whom we thought might be your father. Yes, sit down on this log. It fell in this position and I thought we would leave it here for a seat by the side of the road."

When they were seated, he began. "Nearly two weeks ago a stranger, a gentleman, came to Forest

Home, seeking for his long-lost daughter, always thinking she was among some of the Indians east or west, where so many had been driven. He met one of the Quaker missionaries soon after his return from the Indian Territory, the same ones you were with on your journey West. When they told him all they knew of a white woman whose home was in the forest, who was interested enough to leave her family and go so far to see her adopted mother in her last days. Hope revived and he left his home in the East. Following their directions he traveled almost day and night that he might yet find the long-lost child. When he reached our home, worn out with anxiety and fatigue, he met Isabel, and the moment he saw her he lost consciousness. If I had not been beside him he would have fallen. His condition was such that for several hours he was as if he had received a fatal shock. He finally revived and we are anxious about this meeting with you, as he has been looking forward to it with all the fervor of his sensitive nature. Knowing you were not expecting to see any of your own people and were too young to remember anything that could give us certain evidence, I wanted to tell you how we felt. Hoping you may be careful and not disappoint him too suddenly, if you can not receive him as your father, you can let him realize it gradually. I see they are coming now. Remember, dear," he said, in a lower voice, "he is a real gentleman of the Lafayette type of the French, and I know you always had a warm feeling for the French people at the forts."

He looked anxiously at his wife who sat there with her face hidden in her hands and had not moved or spoken a word, then turned to look at Muncy sitting

by her side. Great tears were rolling down her cheeks and she too was silent. What could it mean?

With his staff in one hand and Isabel holding the other, the father approached them. Seeing his face was losing its color, Jehu stepped to his side.

At the sound of her daughter's voice, Blue Belle arose quickly and clasped her to her breast. When she had held her for a few moments, Isabel whispered, "Dear Mammy, your father is longing for his child to recognize him."

Letting her go, Blue Belle turned and gazed on his face a moment as he leaned on the arm of her husband for support. Then reaching up, she threw her arms around his neck, drawing his face down to her own, she exclaimed, "Yes, thank Heaven, it is my own dear father."

Turning to Jehu, she said: "I was going to spend the rest of my days searching for him and I knew you would help me, but it was a great surprise to find him already here, and to find him at home with you all."

Just then Frank came up and shouting for joy, cried out: "I knew you would, Mammy, for he is just the best grandfather we ever saw. Judging from the way the ponies eat, I would think Mammy and Aunt Muncy were hungry."

"Sure enough," said Isabel, "and I have plenty cooked. They can take their time coming. I want to have things hot," and she started for the house. Her brother, going faster than she, called back to her that the stove would be hot by the time she got there.

The others slowly wended their way up the green lane, passed the inclosed yard and rustic seats in front

of the new house which Blue Belle entered and was seated on her new chair before she noticed any change in Forest Home. So absorbing were the many things that had taken place in a few short weeks, she felt like one in a happy dream going on and on into a more complete life. Then like one arousing from pleasant dreams, she began to look around her, first at the bright windows glistening in the evening sunlight, then the smooth white walls of the well-furnished room and the beautiful carpet each met her admiring glance, while Jehu watched her with pleasure, and her father studied the face of the one he hoped was in very truth his long-lost child.

Muncy sitting on the porch was wondering why Blue Belle had not told her what a fine home she had in the forest, when she heard Frank's voice, who had come in from the kitchen in time to see his mother's surprise, saying: "Mammy, did you know we thought, as it was time we were making some improvemnt, that we would have a great surprise in store for you by building and furnishing these rooms, and doing some other things while you were gone? We were doing it to please you, but it kept us from being so lonesome. We thought we had the biggest surprise that was possible in store for you, until he came," he said, looking at her father. "So we had no part in your greatest surprise."

"I thing you are mistaken, my dear boy, in your having no part in this meeting I have had with your mother. All of you had a part in bringing me up out of the dark shadows of death and giving me love and hope to look forward with you to the coming of this day, when hope is no longer deferred."

"I had not seen it in that light, grandfather, but you

are mostly right. Where's Aunt Muncy, Mother?" he said, going to the front door. He was just bringing her in when Isabel appeared to announce supper, and all followed her into the dining-room.

When supper was over, Blue Belle still absorbed in thought, retired to the room in the older part of the house, which had been the family bed-room. She found their saddle-bags just as Frank had placed them on the big chest when he brought them to the house. One by one she removed the packages until she came to the one she was looking for. Wrapped in the fawn skin, she held it in her hands and stood thinking for some time, then going to the old bureau she opened her private drawer and placed it under the linens she had left there before going away. While she thought, "How sacred these things are, yet can I ever show them to father and open the wound afresh, which I hope to obliterate by filling the evening of his life with love and good cheer?" With grateful feelings she thought it would not have to be decided now. "Jehu will help me. How can I be thankful enough for such a man and such children, and the privilege we have of comforting and brightening his life after all the sad years he must have had?"

Leaving her father in his comfortable chair, lost as it were in meditation, Jehu went out to assist Frank with the evening work.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRAVELERS AT HOME.

AUNT Muncy hustling about with her sleeves tucked up and a large apron over her Indian dress, was giving Isabel every possible assistance, while she admired the stove and all the modern improvements from the dough chest and new tinware to the sink for washing dishes in. But most of all was the new cupboard, with its glass front, through which could be seen a great variety of flowered dishes.

"I guess we have made so much change we have overwhelmed Mammy," said Frank. "I wish she could enjoy everything like Aunt Muncy does."

"Never mind, my boy, that will come in time. She has had so much to think about lately, it is necessary for her to be alone and have time to think it over. She has met with as much in a few weeks as some people do in a lifetime."

"Well, I hope it will be all right, but I want to see Mammy like she was before she went away." Then he started for the barn, pondering over two questions, neither one possible for him to solve. The first was his mother. How could she receive and be so fully satisfied that she had found her father? Only asking one question,

his name, and hearing that she had met him with the joy of one who had found a father, who had long been absent. He was so glad for grandpa's sake that she could receive him with open arms. But how she could do this and never have heard anything about her parents, he could not make out. The other was concerning Aunt Muncy, who was as happy and jovial as a young girl, if possible more so than his bright cheerful sister, Isabel. He had expected she was good, but somehow he was thinking of her as a disappointed maiden lady and not very happy. He saw his father down by the corn crib and determined to consult him. He found him as anxious to talk the subject over as he was.

"There is something mysterious about your mother I fail to understand. She found changes in her home, it is true, but she has something of more importance on her mind than any of these things, and her attitude is not such as indicates surprise. She is more like one overwhelmed with gratitude for the fulfillment of some earnest longing of the soul. It must have been awakened while in the West, as she showed no anxiety about the future before she left home, never saying anything about the possibility of having relatives anywhere. Yet it appeared from what she said, she was intending to search for her father if she had not found him here."

"Well, I suppose we will understand all about it when Mammy gets rested and tells about her experience while among the Indians. She must have heard something concerning her people."

"Well," said his father, "I hope everything is working out for good and we should be thankful enough to wait now that she is safe home with us again."

"Yes, indeed," said Frank. "I ought to be ashamed. Sure I'll not say anything to any one else and I hope she will be like herself in a few days, but I would like to know what you think about Aunt Muncy. She appears to be delighted with everything new, and just as happy as a young girl, preparing to have a house of her own. You know I never saw her before. Somehow I was expecting to see her very sober at her age, a disappointed old maid."

Just then a merry laugh rang out behind them, and they both turned quickly, for it had the natural ring as they used to hear it.

"Why, my boy, I can tell you more about Aunt Muncy than your father can. He knew her many years ago. She has had much experience since then. When I met her, in the time of her mother's illness and death, she was a patient, lovable Christian woman. One whom the trials and disappointments in life served to purify rather than embitter. On our return from the West, we came across the lover from whom she had been separated for many years. Now they are very happy with the brightest prospects for the future. A new home to build away out in the Indian Territory. Now she has an opportunity to prepare for the furnishing of her own home, and be able to meet every requirement in the home in which she and her adored Lightfoot expect to live and their home worthy to be imitated by all the women and girls of her tribe among her people, who will rejoice when they hear that she intends to return and live near them in a home of her own."

"Well, that is fine. I remember Lightfoot. We used to work and hunt together before the war in which

the French were driven away. I suppose he went with Muncy's tribe to the West."

"Yes," said Blue Belle. "We have much to tell, but I want to look around some. I see you have built a pen for our wild hogs."

"Oh, yes. We fed out quite a lot of them some time ago. We give them all the corn they can eat, then drive them to Pittsburgh market."

"Well, that is good," said Blue Belle. "That killing job always distressed me."

"Yes, we have none of that trouble now and make so much more out of them, too."

"Yes, and you like to lean on the fence and watch them eat when you have time. I was close to you before you knew I was here. I came down the lane, now I want to go over the orchard. We can have a little time as father is resting on the lounge and Muncy is helping Isabel with her work. I think they are fixing to bake bread or something," she said, as she went after a large rosy apple she saw in the grass.

Then they went over the orchard, row by row, gleaning a few fine apples, that being out of reach at the time of gathering had now dropped of their own accord. By the time they had gone over them all, they had a variety of choice apples, and Blue Belle was delighted, saying, "It was very kind of you to leave a few, for I love above all things to glean. I wonder what Muncy will think of these. She made a great ado over some a farmer gave us on our way home, but these are nicer than any we saw."

"Yes," said Jehu, "and we have a pretty good market for apples at forty to fifty cents a bushel and thirty

cents for oats, but I believe hogs and corn will be the riches of Ohio when we get enough land cleared."

"Yes, it is wonderful to travel a long distance over the country and see the stalwart men cutting down the forests in some places, in others rolling them together with their hand spikes, which I think would test the backs of the strongest men following it up all day. Others were getting them together with ox teams and firing them while yet green."

"I see the children are milking and Muncy is out helping. I would like to go over to them, but the sun will soon be down and we have not been in the garden yet."

"Well," said Jehu, "I'll take the apples into the kitchen; they'll be nice for lunch, as we had an early supper." Coming out they went into the garden. "Some things have been cut down with the heavy frost, but so long as it don't freeze the vegetables are fine. Isabel has been hoping you would get home in time to enjoy them."

"My," said Blue Belle, "but you do have a fine garden. So much nice cabbage and everything else. You have dug the potatoes and gathered the apples and pears, but I got here in time to gather beans and pull the beets and squashes. What will Muncy say when she sees this garden? Really we should have waited until they could be with us."

"Well, here we are," said Frank, holding the gate open for his sister and aunt.

"When Frank told me you were in the garden, I never stayed to wash up the milk things," said Isabel.

"They can wait till we get back, as I left a good fire in the stove and water in the tea-kettle."

Her mother met her on the walk and taking both her hands in her own, pressed them to her lips. "Poor little hard hands, they have been doing a double amount of work while mother was away. I surely appreciate what you have done, for I know how much work it takes to keep the weeds down and have a garden like this. Then all the corn in shock and the apples gathered. The building with all the hauling that it would take. I can't see how you could accomplish so much."

"No, you can't realize what a worker our boy has become," said her husband.

"Oh, we have been very fortunate, Mammy," said Frank. "A carpenter got lost in the forest east of us and wandered around till he came to our clearing, and as the light was shining through greased paper he soon found our house. Of course, Daddy took him in for the night and found out next morning he was just the man he wanted, so he persuaded him to stay. I tell you he did a good job building the house. Never a mistake. Did he Sis?"

"Not any that I have noticed," faltered Isabel.

As her mother thought she appeared embarrassed, she said, "Well we can look over the house in the morning. I will be rested then. I am glad to see the old house standing yet, it would not be like home without that. But the glass windows and whitewash are a great improvement."

Just then Muncy came up the walk and said, "I have been going all over the garden and I never saw anything so nice before. I want to get it all in my mind. These flower beds at the entrance, with this wide, smooth

walk, kept as clean as a floor, are just the thing to keep one cheered up while cultivating the vegetables. The beautiful combined with the useful. That is ideal and I want to have one just like this at my home."

They all laughed. But her sister said, "She means just what she says and she expects to have a good man to help her carry out all her plans."

"Sure then I must congratulate you," said Jehu, extending his hand to his almost sister for a hearty shake. "I knew you travelers had something important on your minds."

"Yes," said Blue Belle, "we have indeed when we have time to consider just how much of it ought to be told. I am sure it would be more than father would be able to bear now. Aunt Muncy can tell you all about our narrow escape from the wolves," she said, turning to Frank and Isabel, "and as the evenings are chill, you had better come in by the fire."

"Yes," said Isabel. "I was forgetting to finish my work:" And they all started in, Frank and his father stopping at the wood-house to take wood with them, as was their habit when coming in the back way.

Isabel and Muncy went to the kitchen, while Blue Belle went to look for her father. She found he had not been asleep. She smoothed his face with her hands and brushed back all the stray locks from his forehead. When she saw his eyes were about to overflow with tears, she used her little soft 'kerchief and wiped them away. When he could speak he said, "No, my dear child. I suppose I must have been too thankful to sleep. No, I was not lonesome and the time did not seem long, for I had so much to think about."

They were in the large living-room in the older part of the house, where a bright fire was burning in the great fireplace, where she had done her cooking. The room had been kitchen and general living and sleeping-room when the children were younger.

“Yes, father, our hearts are full of gratitude to-night. Would you like to sit in this big chair while we talk?”

CHAPTER XV.

HEAVEN'S REWARD.

THEY could hear the voices of the others in the kitchen, and finding her father would like to hear what Muncy was about to relate of their experience with the wolves, she requested them to all come in.

As Muncy was a person gifted in relating things in a way that made them interesting, they were soon listening to every word, absorbed in her account.

Blue Belle sat leaning, or rather resting her head against the back of her chair, with closed eyes, while Isabel sat on a stool at her feet, with her arms resting on her mother's lap, her favorite position.

All were surprised, especially Blue Belle's father, that one of the Indians could be giving them such a vivid description of their journey, and their very narrow escape from a fate that would have prevented their ever knowing what had become of them.

When she came to the part where Blue Belle rushed out among them with her firebrands, they were so delighted and relieved as to make a break in the narrative. Frank shouted: "That was a brave little mother. She was always quick to think and action came with her thought."

"Now," said Muncy, "I want Blue Belle to tell you of our experience that night we spent in the Indian's cabin in the great woods. She alone can tell you that which unveiled to her a part of her childhood."

She had been thinking while Muncy was talking and had made up her mind as to how she should tell of the things revealed on that never-to-be-forgotten night. While they were talking in a general way, asking questions which Muncy could answer, she went to the bedroom and without a light secured the little box and its contents from where it was hidden under the linen in the drawer. Going back to the family with it in her hand, her heart was strong in the faith she had of being kept from saying anything that would bring up afresh the grief her father had borne so many years. The most sacred things in connection with it had been removed from the box and wrapped in the fawn skin and were left hidden away, if only the part hidden in her mind could remain silent as these would.

When she sat down in her chair by the fireside, they were looking at the little box she held in her hands. It occurred to her it might be best to show them the necklace and then answer such questions as would satisfy them without going into the details of the Indian's experience as related by Lightfoot. She removed the lid and held it up in the firelight, asking her father if he had ever seen it before.

"Oh, yes," said he, "and it was on your neck that fatal day. Recognize it? I should think I do."

"Well, look at this name engraved underneath. The initials made me think my name might be Isabel."

"You imagined right, for that was your name and this your necklace."

"Can you remember anything about it?" asked her husband. "Where did you find it? Had your almost sister been keeping it for you?"

Blue Belle sat looking into the fire. The necklace had brought up more questions than could be answered without bringing up things she wished to avoid. "Jehu, you will just have to wait, I know you never saw nor heard of it before; neither can I remember anything about it."

"Well, your father knows it belonged to his little daughter who was carried away by an Indian. Yet that does not give us the real evidence that you were the one," said her husband. "I believe you are, but I wanted him to have the satisfaction of knowing without a doubt."

Turning to her father, she said: "If it were possible to have the past opened up before you, that terrible event that took away from you all the joy in life, could you bear it now? If it gave you positive evidence that I am your own child?"

Jehu sat motionless. The older man arose to his feet. Lifting both hands as far above him as he could reach, as if to emphasize his words, while he exclaimed in a tragical voice: "Heaven has known my grief for them and I have found comfort, for the ones gone into the higher life seem near sometimes. But you can not know the anxiety I have gone through for the living. My lovely child gone, I knew not where. How I sought for her, longing and hoping, until hope deferred made my heart ache and grow weary again and again. It was like listening for a voice you can not hear, and waiting for a



“My lovely child gone, I knew not where.”

presence that never comes. So I can have no greater joy at this time than to know you have had and can give me that evidence."

"Well, I can assure you I have had the account from the lips of the one whose father did the cruel deed. Wasn't my mother's hair just like my Isabel's, and my brother's short silken curls? And you called me Bell and my name was changed to Blue Belle, and we have never heard of any of that name before, and do you ever see many persons with eyes the color of blue mine are?"

"Yes, some of your mother's people had eyes of that particular shade of blue, but they are by no means common," said her father. "Oh, do not for a moment feel that you do not seem my child," he cried out, clasping her in his arms, until her head rested on his breast. "If we could always be satisfied with what our hearts tell us of the truth we might be happy, but skeptical man always wants to know for himself. Oh, my daughter, my own darling child! I have suffered much to live for you, but now I am satisfied I have found you at last."

While he held her and stroked her soft wavy hair, Jehu went for Muncy and the children, who had gone to the parlor of the new house, and they all rejoiced together.

Blue Belle finally said, wishfully looking up into his face, from the stool on which she sat with her arms resting on his knees, "Father, I expect you have a feeling of aversion for all Indians, because one of them robbed you of life's charms. But they are not all cruel, father. Even the one who did that dreadful deed, repented, was regenerated, and lived a Christian life. The Saviour reached him through the death of your innocent child, or was

it his life for the smile he gave him when the weapon was lifted to strike the fatal blow never left him, until the cruel brave was redeemed to a Christian life, and influence for good, though his family and tribe were all lost to him, by the slaughter of white men, but one child with whom he escaped. He taught that son that it gives us no comfort to revenge our wrongs, and he lived alone with him in the great woods for many years, to prevent the tribe who had taken them in from training him for what they are taught to admire, a great, strong, cruel brave. Instead he will now be a missionary for good among the Indians. This, my almost sister, who has already been a power for good among them, will be his companion in the work," she said, turning to Muncy.

"Oh, I am so thankful to hear this," said her father. "Then the short life of my little son was not lost. His sweet smile is now influence for good, still going on in the world. It must be through inward pain and human sympathy we ever become able to forgive our enemies, and unless we do we can not come into a condition in which to be benefitted by Divine forgiveness."

Then addressing Muncy, he inquired: "What was your father's name, and do you have a brother living?"

"My father was Chief Half Moon, and my brother, Oceola, disappeared the time of the French and Indian War. He must not have fallen in battle, for we heard he had been seen at Fort Duquesne, just before the French sailed away, leaving it in flames."

"The reason I inquire," said he, "is because I think I have seen your brother in France. Did it ever occur to you, that seeing Belle going with Jehu, while all your homes were laid waste and your people driven out, that

he might have gone with the French when they left this country, and is probably living in France yet? You may think so when I tell you what occurred there some twenty years ago. A niece of mine became acquainted with a young Chief named Oceola. She was young at the time and her grandmother, who had the care of her, discouraged the friendship, and her family did everything they could to get her mind turned in some other direction. He was going to the same school and was a general favorite with his schoolmates, especially with the girls. They sent her to another school to finish her education and kept them apart for several years, but she married him at last. Since then I have heard they were doing well, but she was persuading him to come to America to live and engage in missionary work among his people."

Muncy stood with hands pressed together while she listened. "Did you say his name was Oceola?"

"Yes, that is the name. It was his likeness to you and what Jehu had told me of their early life together, that led me to think he might be your brother. I heard of his disappointment, too, and the fact that the young girl he wooed and won for his wife bears a striking resemblance to my daughter, Belle, her eyes, her voice and deep-toned laughter."

"Well, surely everything is working together for good," said Muncy. "And they are educated, too?"

"Yes," said he, "and have the means with which to

travel and spend doing good. I have seen the truth as expressed by the English poet:

‘When wealth to virtuous hands is given,
It blesses like the dews of Heaven.’”

And the evening closed for the inmates of Forest Home, with thanksgiving and praise.

CHAPTER XVI.

A HEART TO HEART TALK.

ALL were resting for the night, except Jehu and Blue Belle, who sat talking on subjects she wished to discuss with him alone. She brought out the precious relics, given her by Lightfoot, of her mother and little brother. After he examined them, she said: "Do you think I can ever show them to father?"

"Yes, maybe you can when he has grown stronger and better in health. With you and the children to live for he may be able to carry out the plans he has already been making; the education of Frank and Isabel in the schools they have in the East at present, beginning the coming winter, and traveling and recreation for us. He thinks we deserve a rest after so many years of toil. He wants to take us to France and give us an opportunity to see more of the world while we are resting."

"Poor, dear, father, he must have plenty of means. It will do him good to have use for it, but I think it will be better for his health to stay here and rest and enjoy the very dearest place in the world to me."

"I don't expect you do feel like going away just now; neither do I with you here to make everything so enjoyable."

"But I have been wanting to know about Isabel," she said, changing the subject. "I noticed when you and Frank were talking about the carpenter, she was feeling more than she wished to be known on the subject, so I passed it over as lightly as possible and asked no more questions about him. What do you think or know about the matter?"

"The only thing I know is that if she were interested any more in the young man than her brother or myself were, why, it is her secret. Of course, a concerned mother always sees further than we fathers do. Yet, I noticed she was showing a great deal of interest when her grandfather was talking about the schools in the East, and she mentioned one I think young Downing is expecting to attend next year. He is fine looking and remarkably intelligent. He said his grandfather came from England with William Penn, bought a large tract of land and settled in Chester County, Pennsylvania. But he had an ambition to see some of the Western country and accomplish something with his own hands. He is certainly a fine carpenter and a promising young man. I know he appeared to admire our daughter, but she is too discreet to encourage intimate acquaintance with a stranger, and she had had very little opportunity in a social way. She might be deeply interested for anything I know, and I am very glad she can have her mother to confide in now, as she will do when you are alone together."

"Yes, I have not been alone with her yet, or Frank, either. I am so glad father is not prejudiced against the Indians. He will find Muncy's mind well stored with things that are going on in the West, and she will enjoy

hearing how things are progressing in the Old World, as much as I will."

"It will be a great pleasure to you both to hear him talk on that and other subjects. I have been thinking we should have him invite your almost brother to his sister, Muncy's, wedding, the next time he writes to your people abroad. Then they could have a visit here and go with them back to her home."

"Oh, yes," said Blue Belle. "And get her to bring Muncy a wedding gown. It is really wonderful how things have turned out for my red sister. You see my cousin being so like me will make it easier for her to give me up. If she enjoys missionary work they can start a settlement of helpers. Several tribes in that part of the country have caught the spirit of advancement now from what those Eastern missionaries told me."

"I want to have a visit with them sometime when we can travel by steam. When we have the children ready for school, their grandfather will be very happy and proud to take them with him to the East. It will be a rich experience for them. I am so glad they can both go, as they have never been separated yet."

"Yes, and how fortunate it is that Muncy will be with us, getting ready for her wedding. Preparations for home-making will prevent us from getting so lonesome. Maybe we can get Lightfoot to visit us in the winter when he can't go on with his work."

It will seem like old times when we were young folks together."

"You have not seen him for a long time. I should think you would scarcely know him now," she continued.

"He is a tall, good-looking, well-built man, in the prime of life."

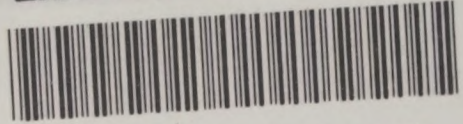
"Oh, yes," said he, "we must have him here before the great event to come off in the spring. It will prepare him better to meet the changes that are coming, for I imagine our home will combine with the wildness of the forest some of the culture and improvement, art and invention are bringing to us. Your father's advent into the family will increase the latter, for we are prepared to entertain his friends, and our children's friends at Forest Home. But you must get to rest. We could talk all night and not be much more than started, because our minds have been so full. It will take several weeks to relate all, or even half of our experience since we have been apart."

"Yes, indeed," she said. "But listen! What noise is that I hear? Oh, yes, it is the chickens, they are crowing for midnight, our own crows. Yes, and our own clock is striking the hour. How good it is to be at home!"

"Well, I am just as glad to have you here, and gladder yet that you can rest in my arms to-night with nothing to make us afraid, while we look forward, trusting that we may be worthy of the prosperity and happiness we are to reap in our dear old, and new, Forest Home."

THE END.

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